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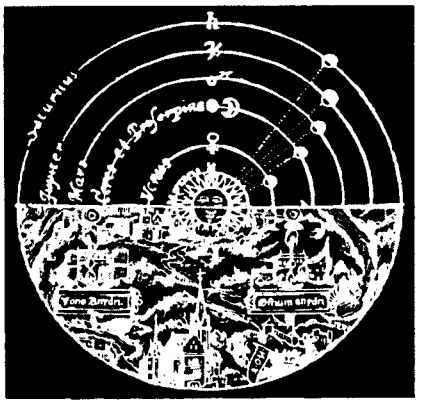

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The Despairing Optimist . . . . . .

RENÉ DUBOS

Urban life is unhealthy, morally corrupt, and fundamentally inhuman. Or so most people in the United States have long claimed it to be, in agreement with Jefferson. Despite their historical anti-city bias, however, Americans have consistently abandoned farms and villages to settle in larger and larger urban agglomerations. More than any other people, they have become addicted to the amenities and enticements of urban life, even while condemning it in the name of biological principles and of puritanical values. This nation of city haters has paradoxically created the largest urbanized society on earth.

The ambiguous attitude of Americans toward urbanization is reflected in the rapid growth and evolution of their suburbs. American city dwellers rarely dissociate themselves from urban life when they move away from the city center to settle in bucolic surroundings. They continue to depend on it for their income, and adopt in the villages or small towns where they take residence ways of life similar to the ones they find objectionable in large agglomerations. As a result, they soon re-create in the rural environments many aspects of the urban environment from which they had sought to escape.

Rampant urbanization is not peculiar to America. Indeed, it is a worldwide social phenomenon that began several thousand years ago. Ever since the late Stone Age, countless farming peoples all over the earth have moved to towns and cities as soon as they had a chance. Many intellectuals, too, have elected urban ways of life, while praising the charms of rural pursuits and the moral values of the village or the wilderness. Now, as in the past, the social classes who most enjoy the wilderness and the rural environment are commonly those who do not have to derive their livelihood from strenuous pioneer life or from farm work, and who can experience quietly the pleasures of woods and streams while retaining convenient access to the city for stimulation and excitement.

Although urbanization is still rapidly increasing all over the earth, there is much talk that cities will soon be rendered obsolete by improvements in the methods of transportation and communication. What is more likely to happen, however, is that the high costs of energy will make the isolated, freestanding house an economic impossibility for most people, and will therefore encourage settlements of higher population density. Furthermore, it has become apparent that even the most sophisticated videotelephone technology cannot provide an adequate substitute for the direct person-to-person contacts. The worldwide trend toward urbanization is likely to continue, since, as in the past, people will want to get together for many of their professional activities. In fact, it is probably erroneous to assume that technological and economic forces are the most important factors in the survival and success of cities.

It used to be thought that ancient cities progressively evolved from farming villages that grew larger with time. But this hypothesis has been rendered questionable by the recent discovery that several human settlements reached a fairly large size—perhaps as large a population as 10,000—even before the development of agriculture. Such was the case for Jericho in the Jordan Valley, Tell Mureybit in Syria, Shanidar in Iraq, Catal Hüyük in Central Turkey. Urban life thus began before agriculture.

Cities probably first emerged as centers of exchange for certain valuable products, such

RENÉ DUBOS is professor emeritus at the Rockefeller University and is the author of *A God Within* and *Beast or Angel? Choices That Make Us Human*.

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as copper, obsidian, and lapis lazuli, that were often traded over long distances during the Stone Age. They were therefore located on convenient trade routes, particularly on rivers and harbors. It is probable also that most of them very early became places of religious worship, and that some may even have started as such. Being the sites of wealth and of religious authority, ancient cities naturally evolved into seats of political power.

For long periods of time, the chief role of the city has thus been to facilitate human intercourse in all its manifestations, to such an extent indeed that much of human life is now inextricably woven into the urban environment. As the Greek rhetorician Libanius wrote of his native city of Antioch, "The pleasantest, yes, and the most profitable side of city life is society and human intercourse--a true city is the place where these attributes are most found." This is still as true of modern cities as it was of Antioch at the beginning of the Christian era.

Economic incentives obviously play a large role in the migration of people from the country to the city, but other factors may be even more important. Perhaps as attractive as the diversity of jobs and the hope of large paychecks is the opportunity that cities provide for the multiplicity of human encounter--professional and business associations, of course, but also the great variety of social contacts with their intellectual, aesthetic, emotional, and sexual rewards. In brief, people move to the city because this is where the human interaction is, and where something unexpected and unplanned may happen. Everything appears possible as one sits or strolls on Fifth Avenue in New York, Regent Street in London, the Place de l'Opéra in Paris, the Corso in Rome.

Admittedly, worries about the urban crisis now loom large in the minds of people, and contribute to the talk about the death of cities. There are obvious reasons for associating the word city with a multiplicity of evils such as substandard housing, environmental pollution, crowded neighborhoods, crime in the streets, noise, and tension—let alone financial difficulties beyond understanding. Despite the atmosphere of apprehension created by these universal urban problems, however, there is not much evidence that people are shying away from cities. College students rapidly forget their anti-city rhetoric when the time comes for them to enter real life. And all over the world poor people continue to flock to shanty towns and *bidonvilles,* where, although they are crowded, uncomfortable, and alienated, they hope to find the adventure and prosperity that are identified in their minds with the urban world. Our time is characterized not by a retreat from cities, nor even simply by efforts to correct their present ills, but rather by an eagerness to rediscover and cultivate certain positive human values that only urban life can provide.

The cultivation of positive urban values has naturally generated efforts to improve existing cities and especially to renovate their centers. More interestingly, perhaps, it has led also to the creation of new cities. The new cities of Europe have an importance that transcends the number of dwelling units they provide, because they can be regarded as the experimental branch of the modern urbanization process. Their planning, growth, and performance have brought to light a number of facts and problems that are significant for all cities, small or large, old or new.

It is obvious, for example, that many social problems are exacerbated by the huge size of modern urban agglomerations. Beyond a certain point, the continued growth of an agglomeration is not advantageous because it creates administrative complexities and human difficulties that interfere with the quality of life. As a reaction against the obscene growth of agglomerations such as New York, Tokyo, London, or Paris, the urban planners of a few decades ago designed new cities of a much smaller size, which they believed to be on a more human scale. For example, Harlow is one of the English new cities that was started in 1947 and attained its maximum planned size of 90,000 in 1972.

According to a recent publication, Harlow has been quite successful. The health and economic status of its inhabitants are better than those of similar populations in other parts of Great Britain. Adults and old people appear to enjoy life in Harlow and many settle there after retirement. The success of a city, however, involves more than these commonsense criteria.

Social planners always hope that the provision of decent housing, steady employment,

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and adequate facilities for medical care, education, and leisure will greatly reduce the toll of human suffering and generate a progressive community. By and large, Harlow and other new cities built during the past few decades are fulfilling several of these hopes, but they have their problems nevertheless. It is to be expected that, even under favorable conditions, some people will not adapt successfully to new surroundings, because of either personality problems or overpowering stresses. But it is also becoming apparent that the very structure of new cities can be responsible for many adaptive failures of their inhabitants.

The city manager of Harlow, for example, reports that the young people of that city are disenchanted because "There is nothing to do and nowhere to go." They find so little of interest in their urban environment that "it may well be that the only solution to their needs can be found in community service in the impoverished areas of central London." There are probably many reasons why young people find little to interest or challenge them in Harlow, but it seems that one of them is simply that the population of the city is too small. Planners generally agree that a population of at least 250,000 is required to support all the amenities that people now expect of urban life—a complete educational system, theaters, orchestras, museums, sport arenas, hospitals with all the medical specialties, and a sufficiently diverse economy to provide fairly stable and potentially interesting employment. The new cities now being developed in Great Britain and in France have been planned for 250,000–500,000 inhabitants, a population size that makes it economically possible in theory to meet all the needs and expectations of modern urban life.

There is fairly general agreement on several other aspects of urban planning, such as pollution control, public transportation, separation of pedestrian from automobile traffic, division of the city into local subunits of a size readily manageable for design and administration, and also favorable for community identification. In the nineteenth century, the English planner Ebenezer Howard suggested that the figure of 30,000 inhabitants would be approximately right for such an urban subunit. Modern urban planners have carried this concept further and have structured developing European cities as if they were made up of a series of villages, each with its own shops, café, elementary school, and playground, in the hope that these elements will foster the emergence of a neighborhood spirit.

Judged from the point of view of comfort and convenience, the new cities that have been created in different parts of the world, including the United States, provide living accommodations that are in general superior to those available in old cities, but this is not sufficient to make them desirable places to live in. "Sterility" is a word commonly used to denote their lack of human warmth, and there is no evidence that this lack can be corrected by efficiency of design or by quality of natural environment.

It is probably unreasonable to expect that new settlements can have the kind of warmth and excitement commonly found in old cities. The vital areas of the latter owe much of their human interest to the old buildings with low rents in which a somewhat offbeat population can carry on marginal trades that could not survive if they had to fit into prevailing economic trends. The social structure of new cities cannot accommodate the coexistence of such anachronisms with new technological departures; it provides little chance for the rich and picturesque diversity that is one of the main human assets of the urban environment.

Old cities, furthermore, derive a romantic appeal from the historical background of their so-called "centers." In the past, cities developed around important official buildings and public grounds—the places of religious worship, the ruler's palace or castle, the city hall, the public grounds in front of official buildings—which provided the agglomeration with its identity. Even in the modern world, the spirit of place of the most famous cities resides in one or several such ancient symbolic centers.

There are many persons, however, who believe that rapid and convenient means of transportation now obviate the need for city centers. They claim that we are moving toward "plug-in" cities or "linear" cities in which shopping malls, sport arenas, educational institutions, theaters, museums, and even churches will be strung along the channels of transportation, wherever convenient.

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Other urbanists, in contrast, believe that the vitality of urban life is still linked to monuments and public grounds organized to create areas of attraction analogous to the historical city centers. They point to the obvious fact that, while one can talk to friends over the telephone, one has first to make friends, and that there is no substitute for personal contact. City centers are the places where the public events that integrate urban life are most likely to be celebrated; where tourists go and where the inhabitants proudly take their visitors; where, perhaps most important, there is the best chance for the unexpected to happen in the form of a new experience or a new acquaintance. The ultimate justification for the city is to facilitate the human encounter.

The planners and managers of new cities in Great Britain and in France recently focused one of their joint meetings on the very topic of "centers and centrality." They all seemed to believe that city centers are essential to the success of urban life, but, as the remarks of the participants made obvious, the meaning of the phrase "city center" is poorly defined; it corresponds to a symbolic statement of cultural values rather than to topographical areas or architectural structures.

The picture evoked by the concept "city center" is most distinct when applied to the Mediterranean countries. In ancient Athens, the busiest place was the agora, an open area below the Acropolis where people were attracted by markets, government buildings, and shrines. In Greece also, the stoae (roofed colonnades) were other gathering places that had popular appeal because they were built to screen shops and pedestrians from the sun. The forum of Roman cities, the Italian piazza, the rambla and plaza of Spanish cities, the French *place* or *mail* likewise call to mind areas, usually associated with important public buildings, where people can stroll, chat with friends, watch strangers, put themselves on display—in other words perform the public activities of their lives.

Great Britain has a long urban tradition, but with a concept of the city, and especially of the city center, rather different from that of the Mediterranean world. Ebenezer Howard taught that the ideal city should be structured within a parklike environment and that the compact urban organization which is characteristic of the European continent should be avoided. Although Howard's ideal of a garden city has rarely been fulfilled, the concept of "centers" in British cities nevertheless calls to mind a multiplicity of gathering places—local theaters, churches, pubs, areas for sports and games—having a character more intimate than the corresponding very public institutions in Mediterranean countries.

Thus, the phrase city center really denotes areas used by the community as stages for acting out the most characteristic aspects of its public life. The nature of the stage naturally differs according to the social or ethnic group involved. The definition of city center is especially ambiguous in American cities precisely because each of the various ethnic groups has retained its own special way of expressing its cultural ethos and therefore requires a different kind of stage for its collective life. Baptists differ from Catholics in the way they celebrate the same religious holy days. People originating from the Caribbean tend to use parks differently from people who have identified themselves with the WASP culture. But granted these ethnic and social differences, it is certain nevertheless that most Americans, like most people of other nations, love to watch the human spectacle of the city center, as proven by the success of Rockefeller Plaza and of various areas where benches or other sitting facilities have been provided in the business districts of urban agglomerations in the United States.

City center thus implies much more than location, design, or economic activity. It denotes a few parts of the city readily accessible to all, where the human interaction is—in markets, cafés, museums, and theaters, in areas for physical activity, for self-display, for loafing, or for daydreaming—areas where crowds can best engage in the face-to-face confrontation from which emerges the spirit of the place and the peculiarities of its civilization. The city centers are the places where one can get at a glance the moods and habits of the community because they provide the environments in which everyone can be an actor as well as spectator in the pageant of collective life. The city centers are to the community what the church steeples are to the village, the visible symbols of its spirit.

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Life and Letters

The Other Inflation

ARISTIDES

The other inflation is grade inflation, the label affixed to the indisputable rise in the grade-point averages of undergraduates at public and private, elite and community colleges and universities across the country. The metaphor of inflation—borrowed from economics, which had earlier borrowed it from physical mechanics—is apt. Economic inflation, defined by Lord Robbins as "the general rise in prices or the decline in the purchasing power of money," has an exact intellectual equivalent in grade inflation: where grades generally rise, their intrinsic value goes down. "When a building catches fire," Colin Clark has written, "it is the combustion of one object which generates the heat required to ignite the next. Unless counter measures are taken, the fire spreads further and further, becoming more and more difficult to control, until there is nothing left. It is exactly the same with inflation. . . ." Professor Clark writes as an economist, but his analogy holds for grade inflation as well.

That the building is ablaze is not any longer arguable. Although further statistical studies are still being done, the phenomenon of grade inflation has thus far been fairly well documented. According to an article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, from "the early 1960's to the early 1970's, the number of A's awarded at a group of major universities more than doubled, while the number of C's fell by not quite half. . . . " At Union College, in Schenectady, New York, on a scale of 4.0, the median accumulated grade-point average of seniors went from 2.38 in 1966 to 3.11 in 1975. At Harvard some 70 percent of the total grades given in the fall 1975 term were As and Bs. The University of Massachusetts, where the collective grade-point average rose from 2.364 in 1966-67 to 2.93 in 1973-74, then fell back slightly to 2.91, seems to reflect what looks to be the national trend. In his summary remarks to a study of grades at twenty-three American colleges and universities, Sidney Suslow, director of the Office of Institutional Research at the University of California at Berkeley, notes that grades have shown a persistent increase since 1963, "from 2.49 that year to 2.94 in 1974" ("A Report on an Interinstitutional Survey of Undergraduate Scholastic Grading, 1960s to 1970s").

An academic subject, grade inflation, academic in both the literal and unhappy senses of the word. And yet one wonders. The issues and questions connected with grade inflation have to do with standards; and standards, it is not priggish to insist, are never wholly an academic matter. Careers—hence lives—hinge on such things as grades; and although teachers may forget this, students whose careers and lives are at stake do not. Grades have long been crucial, not merely to academic success but to launching careers in law, medicine, business, and many other occupations. But they have now become swollen, misshapen, deformed to the point where few people any longer know what their true meaning is.

I had my own first inkling of how confused the matter of grades had become when a young woman, a student in two courses I have taught, told me that she had hoped to do graduate work in clinical psychology but had not been accepted by any of the graduate schools to which she had applied. She was a shy student, not easy to draw out in classroom discussion, but her written work was nonetheless superior, and upon it she had floated to a solid A in each of the two courses she had taken with me. Perhaps she had not done so well in her other courses. But when I asked about her grade-point average, she said it was 3.76, which meant better than three As

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for every B and no Cs whatever. Possibly she had done less than magnificently on her Graduate Record Examination. Possibly because she is shy she was not able to get strong recommendations from professors in psychology, her major. Still, a 3.76 average seemed to me impressive—I, her professor, had had nowhere near so high an average as an undergraduate—and I knew from her work that she was in fact impressive. Evidently a great many students with an average as high as hers must be walking the campuses; and, just as evidently, so high a grade-point average is today no great badge of honor. Such a badge as it is, she now wears it, when last I heard, doing clerical work of a kind well beneath her ability.

Victim does not seem an extreme term to describe this young woman's predicament. But victim of what? Of strange circumstances, but how strange becomes apparent only when one begins to seek out the reasons for the inflation of grades in recent years. Multivarious these reasons turn out to be; but many and (often) discrepant though they are, taken together they form the basis for a question of great moment: What kind of society do we in America want?

To look on the possibly cheery side first, is the chief reason for the inflation of grades that students today are more intelligent—mentally quicker, better prepared, more mature in intellectual judgment—than they were, say, ten or fifteen years ago? How comforting for the short-term evolutionists among us if it were so, but, as it turns out, it apparently is not so. Nationally, we are told, the Scholastic Aptitude Test scores for students entering college in 1975 were lower than the scores of thirteen years before, and in fact lower than similar scores of only five years before.

But test scores, however objective they are said to be, cannot be the last word, especially tests that measure aptitude rather than performance under the pressure of day-to-day academic challenge. Is it, then, possible that the rise in grades is owing to the fact that undergraduates today work harder than did undergraduates of five or ten years ago? Some undergraduates, now as in the past, work furiously hard; and no one is more appalled by stories of grade inflation than the undergraduate who has arduously striven for his As. He is appropriately appalled, moreover, for he—to revert yet again to the economic analogy—is in the position of the man who has worked hard all his life to achieve his pension, only to find, upon retirement, that it is nearly worthless.

But the notion that grades have risen in proportion to an increase in undergraduate effort, giving off as it does pleasant thoughts of a finely just world, is not ultimately persuasive. It does not persuade because other items are more persuasive. Not least among them has been the advent, in colleges and universities around the nation, of what is known as the "pass-fail option" in grading procedures. The pass-fail option means that at some schools a student can take as many as one-quarter of his courses without grade consequence; that is, he receives, in lieu of an ABCDF grade, either a pass (credit) or fail (no credit) for his effort. The boom period for the installation of the pass-fail option—according to Professor Arvo E. Juola of Michigan State University, and author of "Grade Inflation (1960-1973): A Preliminary Report"—was during the years 1967-1971. These were the years of the great student tumult, and the pass-fail option seems to have been a student demand everywhere acceded to.

Still, the pass-fail option had much to recommend it. Under its beneficence, a certain leeway in the selection of courses could be allowed those most competitively engaged in the academic marketplace. Twenty years ago, for example, most premedical students dared not risk taking an intellectually adventurous course outside their field of study—one in philosophy, say, or modern literature—lest they receive a C or worse, causing their grade-point average to drop, and the door to medical school to slam shut upon them. Consequently, the physicians of that generation tend to be among the most narrowly educated group ever to have passed through a university. Pass-fail, had it been in force, might have made possible an undergraduate life of greater intellectual breadth for such students.

In practice, though, the pass-fail option seems to be used today less to extend frontiers of learning than to protect the flanks of students. The majority of undergraduates who

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use it do so, it seems, for those courses (including required courses) that seem to them most threatening—most threatening, that is, to end in a grade below a B. Whether or not taking a course pass-fail reduces the intensity of a student's intellectual effort by removing the competitive element is not altogether clear. (On occasion, students who have taken my courses pass-fail have done A work. More often, in my limited experience, students enrolled pass-fail have tended to perform in the middle range between C and B.) More to the point, the pass-fail option has had the result of raising grade-point averages, if only by removing some of the more strenuous courses—courses that might once have produced numerous Cs, Ds, and Fs—from the machinery of grading.

Another mechanical contrivance that has caused the raising of grade-point averages is the greater leniency of rules permitting students to withdraw from courses. Withdrawals were always possible, but formerly the conditions under which a student could withdraw from a course were rather stringent, and the decision to seek a withdrawal had to be made fairly early in the term. Now withdrawals can not only be made fairly late in the term at most schools, but no reason for the withdrawal need be given. Frequent (if unstated) reasons for withdrawals are that a professor is too dull, the reading load in a course is too heavy, or the student finds himself out of his depth and calls for the withdrawal as for a life preserver to pull him to safety. Used as a means of avoiding boredom, strenuous work, and failure, withdrawals can only have further contributed to the inflation of grades.

But more significant is the simple fact that higher grades—more As and Bs, fewer Cs and Ds—are now awarded than previously. Why should this be so? Not long ago I heard a student remark that he thought professors now gave higher grades to students as a form of bribery; higher grades, his reasoning ran, were the tacit payoff for undergraduate political quiescence. When queried further on the point, he said he was not prepared to argue that this was done consciously by professors—he was inclined to think it was done unconsciously—but he had not the slightest doubt that grade inflation was tied to politics. Not the least interesting aspect of this observation is that the student who made it is not himself notably political.

When a pattern is so clear, a trend so undeniable, the temptation is to look for causes commensurate in clarity to effects. And the pattern of grade inflation is astonishingly clear, the trend undeniable. Professor Juola, in his report, asks: "Are grades in higher education undergoing inflation? The answer is an emphatic 'Yes!' " In "Whither Grades?," a roughly 1,300-page department-by-department longitudinal study of grades at the University of Minnesota, Gary Engstrand has shown that not only have grades risen cumulatively at his school but they have done so pretty much across the board. As and Bs are up and Cs and Ds down, not only in the College of Liberal Arts but in the College of Veterinary Medicine and in the College of Business Administration. Everybody, as the old popular song has it, is doing it.

When the causes come to be considered, they turn out, in the three studies I have looked at, to be manifold. Sidney Suslow speculates upon no fewer than thirty "factors responsible for grade inflation." Divided into four categories (Student Behavior, Faculty Behavior, Changes in Grading Policies, Other Influences or Changes), and running from "intense competition for admission to professional programs" to "adoption of permissive standards for educationally disadvantaged students [that] has resulted in their adoption for all students," no one of Mr. Suslow's factors seems in any way irrelevant.

Yet for all the soundness of Mr. Suslow's particular factors, in a more general way grade inflation seems the logical consequence of the contradictions of our thinking about higher education. Going no further than language, consider the phrase "higher education" itself. The belief in education—the more, the better—is endemic to Americans. But as greater and greater numbers of students go off to college, that adjective "higher" grows less and less accurate. Behind the hope of getting as many people as possible into college is the hope of changing the situation of those we think of as the disadvantaged and underprivileged. But change it to what?—a situation that finds them privileged or advantaged? Can everybody be advantaged and privileged? On the face of it,

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this is an impossibility. Yet one way to meet our extravagant expectations is to lower our standards.

A mocking tone has crept into that paragraph, but who has not felt the pull of the goal of a society in which everyone is well educated? When children make the climb out of the slums or out of narrowly ethnic neighborhoods to succeed at a university and thence at a graduate or professional school, it is most impressive. Ability, ambition, discipline made possible their rise, excellence has been duly rewarded, and what we are pleased to call "the system" appears to have worked once again.

Grades have long been an integral part of this same system, though at various times they have been under attack. In the latter half of the 1960s students made a great pretense to nonchalance about grades, but behind that nonchalance was a serious interest in getting the highest grades possible. Complication of a moral kind set in when, during the Vietnam War, grades became crucial to student deferment from the draft. Many professors who did not believe in the rightness of the war did not believe they ought to aid it in any way—and so, in an act of academic sabotage of the war effort, some of them gave all their students As. The entry of large numbers of minority students into the universities on a programmatic basis also had a consequence for grades. A heavy emotional investment of hope was placed in these students, an investment with a built-in self-fulfilling aspect: one so wanted these students to succeed that it was frequently difficult not to nudge them along with a helping hand. Not many professors spoke openly about it, but the contemporary equivalent of the old "gentleman's C" in many schools became the black's B.

Grades were simultaneously played down in theory and raised up in practice. Concurrently, at many universities and colleges the curriculum seemed to loosen up, if not cave in, in the attempt to make way for relevance and with-it-ry. Student interests began to be catered to more than ever before. In the cliché of the day, many courses became less "structured." This, too, had consequences for grading. If one is offering a course entitled "Women and the Media" or "The Space of Intimacy," how, in such a course, can one award grades? Can a student get a C in "Theories of Play" or an A in "Deviant Behavior"? (These are the titles of actual college courses; their names have not been changed lest the guilty be protected.)

Grade inflation would soon become a student problem, but it is a problem brought on by faculty behavior. For reasons various and sundry, the obligation of honor in grading has been relinquished. When, for example, it became evident that the great boom in education was over, and that for persuasive demographic reasons enrollments were down and would not soon rise again, professors and administrators did not see it as a splendid time to invoke standards. Could a good small school, suffering under rising costs and declining students, afford to flunk many out? In larger schools, with emoluments on the line—higher salaries, lighter teaching loads—it was scarcely the time to frighten students off to other departments by severity of grading. Some teachers graded loosely to ensure the regard of their students as well as high enrollments in their own classes. During this same period, students would be asked to evaluate their teachers. For younger faculty members, contract renewal and sometimes tenure might hinge on these evaluations. A young teacher enforcing firm grading standards just might have the same firm standards applied by his students to him. All these factors were scarcely an inducement to academic rigor.

Even if one has felt none of these pressures as a teacher, something of the atmosphere of grade inflation can still seep through to affect the way one awards grades. Anecdotes fill faculty lounges, about students unhappy over getting merely Bs, about others withdrawing from a course after getting a C on a first paper or examination. A professor defends what he takes to be his own implacably high standards by remarking that in a class of seventeen he has given six Cs. Ds and Fs are simply no longer spoken about. Word meanwhile creeps up and down the student grapevine about which professors are tough and which easy graders; "fair grader" is a term almost never heard. As classrooms become less formal, firmness in grading becomes more difficult. With distance between teacher and student eliminated, a low or even a middling grade can seem, not a judgment on per-

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formance, but a personal comment, and as such nothing less than an insult.

Assuming a professor is impervious to all this as well, he is still left with a question of some ethical nicety. Is it fair to employ serious standards in grading when almost no one else does? On the one hand, not to do so is to give students an exaggerated sense of their abilities, which can have harsh consequences in the world outside the university. On the other hand, in the eyes of graduate and professional school admissions directors an honest assessment is likely to have the look of condemnation, a C being akin to the blackball that keeps a young student out of the club. Much the same conditions apply to the letter of recommendation, the language of which, like grades, has been subject to considerable inflation. Any professor called upon to write a letter of recommendation for a decent but not truly exceptional student knows that the first order of such a task is the suppression of candor, without which one is likely to write a recommendation that would read something like the following:

> Mr. Brompton is industrious, dependable, and reasonably serious. Because of his habits of perseverance, I think it likely that he will, with great strain, get through your law school. While I cannot confidently predict that he will be an ornament to his chosen profession, neither does he figure to disgrace it.

But of course no one but a knave would think of writing a recommendation of that kind for poor Mr. Brompton. Instead the likelihood is that he would get a recommendation that, were it written about him, would make Hegel blush.

Lost in all this is the restricted but nonetheless significant meaning of grades. Grades, as has often been said, do not measure learning, but academic performance. They supply a rough but still ready measure of the extent to which a student's talent is joined to industry in bookish things. Except in a most limited sense, grades do not measure character, general intelligence, or even one's chances for success in the great world. Of many wretched measures of academic performance, grades appear to be least inadequate.

For decades, grades have been under criticism, their limitations discussed from every point of view. Yet they do—or until recently did—serve as a useful differentiating tool. Interestingly enough, precisely because of their function of differentiating students according to academic performance, grades have come under attack. For those who saw their influence as baneful, something of the taint of elitism clung to grades, or at least to the idea of sorting people out by academic performance. To eliminate grades thus seemed a long stride on the road to equality. Yet where grades were eliminated the experiment tended not to be a happy one. Students apparently liked to know where they stood academically, and this, for better or worse, grades told them. But grade inflation has turned out to be a vast improvement on all such experiments. By raising all grades it has simultaneously eliminated the differentiating function of grades while carrying the extra advantage of convincing all students to believe themselves academically masterful.

The rub is that differentiation goes on—and in a way that is intrinsically more elitist than the opponents of grades may ever have dreamed. With grades no longer an adequate measure, with letters of recommendation increasingly useless, where may graduate and professional schools look in choosing their students? Up to now they have tended preponderantly to look at an applicant's scores on standardized examinations and at what they take to be the quality of his undergraduate school. Yet relying on standardized examinations and the prestige of certain colleges and universities can only freeze American society further by closing off what has long been a traditional and heavily trafficked form of social mobility in America—that available through academic performance. If grade inflation is not reversed, if grades are not restored to their former function, the time will soon come when students not from upper-middle-class homes, or from a handful of special schools, or from select minority groups, will be locked out of American life. Such are the potential consequences of grade inflation. Less immediate than those of economic inflation, over the long haul they could be much more troublesome.

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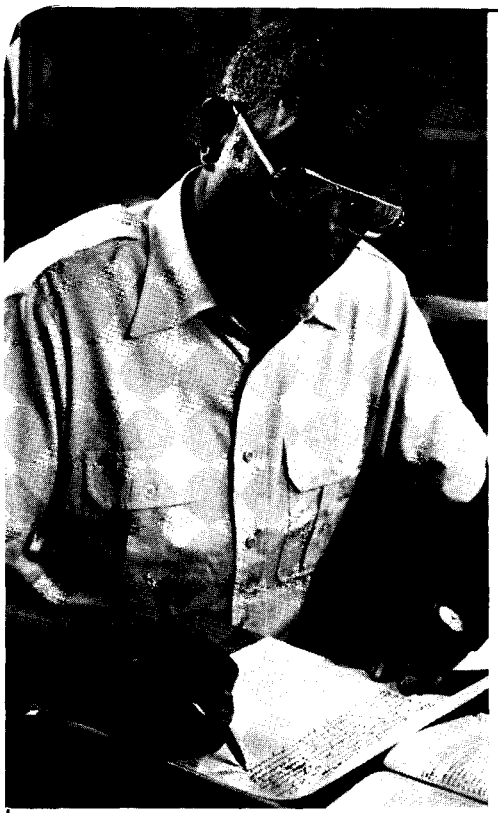

Racial Equality in America

The 1976 Jefferson Lecture in the Humanities Presented by the National Endowment for the Humanities

John Hope Franklin

It is appropriate in this Bicentennial year that a prominent black historian should raise his voice amid the clamor of self-congratulation. In this book, John Hope Franklin reminds us how, since Jefferson did not include blacks among those "created equal," he left a legacy of injustice.

Franklin traces, century by century, the official attitudes that perpetuated the myth of black inferiority. Discrimination, he states, was official policy and it was not until Truman's time that the federal government interested itself in achieving even the semblance of racial equality and significant progress began to be made.

"The institution of slavery was profitable," writes Franklin, "but the damage to the national purpose and even to the national character could not be determined by the planatation book-keeper."

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The Protestant Establishment Revisited

E. DIGBY BALTZELL

ON JULY 4, 1963, I COMPLETED A BOOK ENTITLED *The Protestant Establishment: Aristocracy and Caste in America,* and sent it off to the publisher for what I hoped would be the last time. Some four months later, after the Kennedy assassination, I revised the book's preface and changed the tenses when referring to the late president and sent it off again on Thanksgiving Day.

The book had a modest success, especially among members of the Eastern Seaboard establishment as well as among elite Jews who had been more or less excluded from the establishment. Many people, of course, liked it for the wrong reasons. For instance, it detailed rather exhaustively the history and sociology of upper-class anti-Semitism and ethnic prejudice in America. It was highly critical of the WASP establishment, and quite naturally many of the excluded approved. On the other hand, it emphasized, time and again, the need for some sort of establishment, led by men and women from a secure group of upper-class families who were educated together at private schools and universities and belonged to a network of upper-class clubs and voluntary associations. In the closing pages, I wrote that

> this book, of course, has not argued for the abolition of upper-class institutions in the interest of creating a more egalitarian and homogenized society. Quite the contrary. These institutions are vital prerequisites of a secure and organic leadership structure. In an age, moreover, when so many talented Americans are absorbed in success-striving and status-seeking, the institutionalization of a minority community which relieves distinguished men and their families from further status struggles is more important than ever—but only when its membership requirements are based on talent and moral distinction rather than ethnic or racial ancestry. Any vital tradition, Biblical warnings to the contrary, requires the continuous pouring of new wine into old bottles.

Perhaps I was overly naïve and optimistic at the time, and should have taken the Bible more seriously. Since the book was published, some new wine, as we shall see, has surely been poured. But by and large the

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wine has turned sour or the bottles have been smashed, and what remains of the Protestant establishment has been watered down beyond recognition.

In the first place, the establishment in America today is not effective, in spite of the fact that it is hated and feared more than ever before. Authority—a hated word in education, in politics, and in all areas of social life—has been more or less replaced by naked power veiled in manipulation and deceit if not downright fraud. Privacy in sexual, social, and political life in America has declined to an alarming degree; class authority has been largely replaced by the manipulation of the mass media, the threat of class ostracism by the threat of public exposure. But most important of all, the American people, as never quite before in our history, are obsessed with one or another conspiracy theory.

Perhaps the most prophetic lines in the *Protestant Establishment* were the following:

> The final protector of freedom . . . may well be a unified establishment from within which the leaders of at least two parties are chosen, who, in turn, compete for the people's vote of confidence, from different points of view and differing standards of judgment, yet both assuming the absolute necessity of using fair means. . . . An establishment, in other words, may be the best protection against a conspiracy theory of history.

Since that was written, conspiracy theories of history have steadily risen among Americans, probably more among the educated classes than among the hardhats. *Time* magazine reported in November of last year that a recent Gallup poll showed that 65 percent of the American people felt Oswald alone had not been responsible for the assassination of President Kennedy. At the same time, former Senator J. William Fulbright felt the need to write an article on the inquisitorial obsessions of the mass media, which, when he was writing, were dredging up every last detail about the conspiratorial activities of the CIA (largely dominated by old-stock WASPs since its founding after the Second World War). In my own experience, the majority of the academic community believed that the Vietnam War, especially under President Johnson, was led by an evil and conspiratorial elite in Washington. "Looking back on the Vietnam War," wrote Fulbright—who was the darling of the intellectuals at the time of his opposition to the war—"it never occurred to me that President Johnson was guilty of anything worse than bad judgment. . . . President Johnson and his advisors were tragically mistaken about the Vietnam War, but by no standards of equity or accuracy did they qualify as 'war criminals.' "

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Fulbright was writing at a time when the American people had become so atomized that their mistrust seemed to have no limits. Conspiracy theories of history are the natural outgrowth of a rapidly declining faith in institutions in America. An informal institutionalization of an establishment is but an extension of institutionalization in general—that is, in all areas of social life. The lack of, or declining faith in, an establishment soon spills over into a lack of faith in, and antipathy toward, all institutions. In September of last year, the General Social Survey made by the National Opinion Research Center reported an alarming lack of faith in a wide variety of American institutions. The proportions of Americans surveyed who expressed confidence in major areas of American life, in September 1974 and September 1975, were as follows:

	Percent Favorable	
	1974	1975
Major corporations	31.3	19.2
Organized religion	44.2	24.3
Education	49.0	30.9
Executive branch of government	13.6	13.3
Organized labor	18.2	10.1
Press	25.8	23.4
Medicine	60.3	50.4
Television	23.4	17.8
Supreme Court	33.1	30.7
Scientific community	44.9	37.8
Congress	17.0	13.2
Military	39.6	35.2

Is it any wonder that one of the most popular men in America today, especially among the younger generation, is Ralph Nader, who makes a profession of sowing mistrust of our major institutions? And he is, of course, not alone. Consider *Time* magazine, for example, which was founded, staffed, and dominated by members of the WASP establishment under the leadership of Henry Luce, and was often accused of Anglo-American chauvinism and biased reporting that favored establishment and (as they say today) "elitist" values. Nowadays *Time* is keeping up with the trend, leveling the elite and exposing the weaknesses of the increasingly midgetlike mighty. Thus if one is seeking an excellent job on the late President Kennedy—in pieces on "JFK and the Mobster's Moll" and a detailed outline, with titillating pictures, of "Jack Kennedy's Other Women"—*Time* provides it. In its first issue of this bicentennial year, it did another excellent job on President Ford's "Ridicule Problem." Such is the compassionate tone of our egalitarian and

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elitist society, where no authority or conventions of decency exist and where the media are increasingly setting our only standards. But then, *Time* is only reporting, in an objective way, what everybody else is doing and saying.

What an establishment means is that a society is led by a class of men who act according to an agreed-upon code of manners. Certain things are not done; if they are done, they are *not* discussed in public, even when the breaches of convention lead to class ostracism. Without class conventions and class ostracism, on the other hand, everything that happens becomes public property and media exposure is the only remedy. The almost institutionalized "leaks" in Washington today are symbols of a classless elitism.

Two examples from recent history come to mind. In 1936, when the WASP establishment was still dominant and Franklin Roosevelt was leading the nation through one of its great social and political revolutions, Edward VIII abdicated the British throne in order to marry a twice-divorced woman from Baltimore. For three years the king and Mrs. Simpson had carried on their affair under the knowing eyes of her husband and a large part of the British establishment, but without the knowledge of the British public. The affair was discussed with Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin and within the highest circles of the realm. Yet the British press, led by Lord Beaverbrook, kept the news (already making headlines in America) from the public through a gentleman's agreement. This successful suppression of the truth by the establishment was not news control in the style of Nazi and Communist totalitarianism. It was done in a land where most historians would agree that there has been a continuous tradition of freedom of expression, from the days when Karl Marx wrote in the British Museum down to the present.

Another sharp contrast between our media-dominated, egalitarian elitism and established class authority is seen in the comparison of the British Profumo affair with Spiro Agnew's stepping down from his office as vice-president of the United States. Profumo, a British member of Parliament who was found to have lied to his class peers, was so humiliated by his breach of conventions that ever since the exposé he has been doing penance as a social worker in London's East End. Agnew, on the other hand, is well on his way—thanks to media publicity—toward his first or second million. He has now cashed in further with a novel on the subject of his recent experience. When class authority declines, money talks, echoing in a moral vacuum.

The first open attack on the WASP establishment after the Second

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World War came when Senator Joseph McCarthy panicked the American people with his cynical and diabolical theories of an upper-class conspiracy to betray America to the Communists. His arch-enemies were the silver-spooned gentlemen in the State Department, chief among them Dean Acheson. McCarthy's conspiracy theories, of course, appealed to an age that had just gone through the case of Alger Hiss, a Baltimorian of impeccable establishment connections who was finally brought to justice by the dogged determination of young Richard Nixon. Dean Acheson—an alumnus of Groton, Yale, and Harvard who wore striped pants, had a handlebar moustache, and spoke with a phony British accent (as McCarthy called it)—stood up to the demagogue when most of the intellectual elite were running to cover their tracks. At the same time, it was a courageous but mild establishment lawyer from Boston, Joseph Welch, who brought McCarthy to his knees.

No need to rehash the Watergate affair once again; it is enough to say that surely no elite was more deracinated than the men around President Richard Nixon, who himself seemed to come from nowhere and found security only in building his palaces at Key Biscayne and San Clemente. One recalls how Hugh Sidey of *Time,* in one of his brilliant capsules on "The Presidency," contrasted Nixon and his colleagues, sitting around between decisions, forever talking of money, with Adlai Stevenson and other establishment types as late as the Kennedy years. It is hard to imagine men like Stevenson, Acheson, or Harriman even knowing what laundered money was, let alone ordering their minions to carry it from place to place in satchels.

At any rate, it is important to record that two men from the very heart of the WASP establishment finally resigned from the Nixon administration: Archibald Cox and Eliot Richardson. The class code of Cox, of Saint Paul's and Harvard, and Richardson, of Milton and Harvard, would no longer allow them to go along with the team. Richardson's resignation was especially interesting because he has always seemed to put duty to his country above any private ideological or moral convictions. Yet although he seems to have many of the best qualities for sound leadership, few think he has the personal appeal that would get him elected to any national office today. It is media appeal—charisma, in the debased use of that term—that has steadily replaced class authority as the principal characteristic for leadership in our atomized society. Years ago Max Weber saw this only too clearly.

I have concentrated so far on the national consequences of the fact that our society has no secure upper class which is able to dominate our

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leadership and see that it remains rooted in some kind of tradition or institutional continuity. But what of the WASP establishment itself, which, as far as its effect on our national life is concerned, has gone with the wind? Let us consider this question in light of the "robber barons" and their descendants, particularly their grandsons and great-grandsons.

By and large, the twentieth-century WASP establishment—national, associational, and educational rather than local and familial—and the Eastern Seaboard upper class in which it was anchored, were founded and financially endowed by the generation of businessmen who came of age during the Civil War and the decade of the 1870s. These men have been called the robber barons, and the time of their ascendancy has been noted as the Gilded Age. Yet they accumulated the great wealth that built up the twentieth-century universities—especially Harvard, Yale, and Princeton, which had been primarily small sectarian colleges throughout most of the nineteenth century. (In the Middle West, John D. Rockefeller's philanthropy almost single-handedly built the University of Chicago.) They also endowed the New England boarding schools and financed the more famous men's clubs at the turn of the century, clubs built by architects like McKim, Mead and White, Horace Trumbauer, and John Russell Pope. While most of the robber barons were self-educated and not necessarily college-bred, their sons went off to the schools and colleges that their fathers had endowed. They went off either before or directly after the First World War, in which many of them fought and some lost their lives. Theirs was the most privileged and opulent generation in American history. They got their jobs through family friends. In business they dealt chiefly with their friends on Wall Street and in the boardrooms of the nation. They trained to be First World War army officers in a gentlemanly group that went to Plattsburgh at the inspiration of Theodore Roosevelt and under the leadership of Leonard Wood. They dominated the first class of naval aviation cadets at Pensacola. And, symbolically enough, the most glamorous of them all, Hobey Baker of Saint Paul's and Princeton, one of the last gentleman athletes of national fame, lost his life flying on the western front.

Most of these men became businessmen and bankers, but many of them were Progressive reformers. Some, like John Reed, who came from an old family in Portland, Oregon, and was a member of the notable class of 1910 at Harvard, became rather famous radicals. Two of Reed's classmates, Walter Lippmann and T. S. Eliot, were of great importance to the intellectual conscience of their era. The two Roosevelts and Woodrow Wilson were, of course, the most eminent political figures of this

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generation. In many ways it was the generation that produced the last exclusive and still authoritative upper class in America, the class I attempted to analyze in the *Protestant Establishment.*

They were also America's last innocent and utterly confident generation. They fought the First World War to save democracy and led the nation in the Second World War to save civilization from totalitarianism. Their unquestioning faith in money-power and in the American right—indeed, duty—to rule the world came to an end, however, in the period between the stock market crash of 1929 and the close of the Second World War. The vast majority of their wives did not go to college, but were presented to society in class-sheltered debutante rituals and lived out their lives as mothers, hostesses, and volunteers in organizational activities. A few, like Eleanor Roosevelt and Frances Perkins, rose from sheltered debutante backgrounds to the highest levels of American leadership.

While achievement of an upper-class position was most characteristic of the robber baron era, the scions of this last innocent generation were largely protected by the privileges of ascription in social life, in business, and in sport. The third generation, the grandsons of the robber barons, came of age in the 1930s. Theirs was the transition generation. In their youth they went, almost as a matter of right, to the best eastern boarding schools. Then on to Harvard, Yale, and Princeton, where they joined the best clubs and graduated usually, but not always, with "gentleman Cs." While their class position was ascribed as far as school and college were concerned, they came out into a depression world where their families and friends were no longer so easily able to supply them with jobs. Many of them found work at *Time* magazine, which, until the death of Henry Luce, clearly reflected a WASP upper-class point of view. (Both Luce and Briton Hadden, his partner in the founding of *Time,* were Yale men.) Although the depression was a jolt to all these sons of privilege, it was especially hard on those on the fringes of wealth whose fathers lost everything in the crash (and some of whom committed suicide). But at that time a large proportion of the scholarships at boarding schools and prestige colleges went to the sons of the impecunious genteel, rather than the sons of underprivileged ethnic and minority groups.

While the unquestioned control of the economy passed out of the hands of the WASP establishment after 1929, the Second World War was an even more democratizing experience for the sons of the privileged in this third generation. In many ways, this war was the most leveling and homogenizing war in our history. Meritocracy was firmly in the saddle,

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particularly in the rapidly expanding army and navy air corps, where twenty-twenty vision was far more important than family connections. Officers came from all walks of life and from every ethnic group. For the first time in their lives, members of the WASP upper class flew and fought and became close friends with Italians, Irish Catholics, and Jews. Actuality, in many instances, shattered stereotypes throughout the various theaters of war. And following the war, the G.I. Bill of Rights was the first really democratizing agent in the history of college and graduate education. The veterans, on the whole, took education seriously and had little patience with the snobbery of fraternities and other class-excluding institutions on the campus.

Owing to both the meritocratic recruitment of officers during the war and the G.I. Bill afterward, many talented members of minority groups rose up to challenge the authority of the WASP establishment in the postwar years. Change has a way of creeping up on us, however. The 1950s were a period of seeming stability—except for the McCarthy affair, which in many ways pointed toward things to come in the 1960s, and even more, so I believe, toward our current decade and beyond. Meanwhile various minority groups, especially the Jews, rose to widespread suburban opulence even as the WASP upper class declined in power, affluence, and the influence they had been able to exert through their style of life. In Philadelphia, the city I know best, the major banks and trust companies, the Pennsylvania Railroad, and the University of Pennsylvania used to be dominated and run by members of the city's close-knit and long-intermarried upper class. Today none of these are under such control.

The upper-class style of life was also changing. Whereas most members of the second WASP generation had been able to keep up their ancestral lands and their large houses, the third generation—without servants for the first time in countless decades—was no longer interested or able to do so. Hence they sold off their property to developers of smaller "estates" for the newly affluent. (I recall talking to a parents' meeting at a school on the Main Line after the war and finding out, through a show of hands, that most of the people in my audience had not lived here before the war.) While all the grandchildren of the robber barons had gone to private schools, some were now sending their children to local public schools—not always for economic reasons, but rather because of democratic convictions. Not only that, but many of those children, instead of going to Harvard, Yale, or Princeton, were forced to enroll, as we shall see, in obscure colleges with unfamiliar names.

The great economic changes of the fifties—the rising affluence of so

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many and the declining affluence and influence of the upper class—paved the way for the crisis of the sixties. The Kennedy administration was in many respects the great divide. President Kennedy himself was of course symbolically important as the first non-WASP to live in the White House. Although his closest advisers might have been called the Irish Mafia, he had gone to Choate, Princeton, and Harvard, and his administration was the last to be widely staffed with members of the eastern seaboard WASP establishment. However open to question his political effectiveness may have been, I think there can be no doubt that his administration gave Americans in general, and the younger generation in particular, a feeling of confidence and stability. To mention a small example that is nevertheless indicative of how far we have come: just as the press left the American people more or less unaware that President Roosevelt was a cripple, so it also, by tacit agreement, rarely if ever showed President Kennedy on the golf course, although he loved the game. Both he and Roosevelt had the establishment's ability to control the press indirectly in the interest of social stability and traditional authority—a far cry from today, when everyone is so interested in having the mighty revealed with warts and all, to the point where they have become almost all warts. If the press did not photograph John Kennedy on exclusionary golf courses in Palm Beach, today it is gleefully ready to photograph President Ford falling down the ski slopes at Vail, Colorado.

With the assassination of President Kennedy in the fall of 1963 and the outbreak of revolution on the campus at Berkeley in September 1964, the tearing apart of American society, and the bifurcation of all established restraints, began in earnest. This was largely a revolution of the younger generation, but first another word about their parents. Since the *Protestant Establishment* was published, in early 1965, there has been a slow but steady liberalization of the admissions policies of the exclusive urban clubs as well as, to a lesser degree, the suburban country clubs. The rigid exclusion of Jews has broken down to a considerable extent. At the same time, the clubs are having a hard time remaining solvent. Among other reasons for this, bear in mind that when there is at the top a heterogeneous and egalitarian elite rather than a class-dominated society, important decisions are less likely to be made in the anonymous and excluded atmosphere of private clubs. At the elite level, moreover, social life in general is becoming increasingly functional rather than class dominated.

It was not so long ago that business firms first had luxurious boardrooms and private dining rooms with modern art on the walls—these replacing the rolltop desk, spittoon, and sawed-off pencils of an earlier

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day. Today's businessmen have given up home and club entertainment in favor of elaborate conference-room affairs attended by men having common functional interests rather than a common upper-class background. Even when an upper-class businessman does entertain at home, his guests often include his business and functional peers. Before the Second World War, by contrast, the president of an old family firm in Philadelphia had worked with a close associate for fifty years and never once entertained him either at his club or in his home. This would be impossible today in our lonely but more gregarious expense-account society.

Since the war, life at the top has also become less and less place oriented. Before the war, the powerful were to be seen living on their vast estates, with large staffs of servants, on the Main Lines of America—then for two months each year in other luxurious houses at fashionable resorts. Today they are living almost anonymously in unostentatious houses without full-time live-in servants, traveling by air to ski in New England, Colorado, or Europe or to sail the Caribbean or the Mediterranean. They may devote some summers to educational travel with their children, spending no more than a few weeks with their parents who still cling to their old summer homes. The children are then left with their grandparents while husband-and-wife couples charter a boat to get away from it all. What they need to get away from is the great pressure under which they live their functional lives—pressure brought on by democratization, the fear of unfavorable publicity, and increasing government regulation. And perhaps most important of all, since business is now a group operation, committee decisions have replaced the arbitrary individual decisions of the past, a process that is usually time consuming and emotionally exhausting.

Finally, there is another interesting new phenomenon among an increasing number of old-stock Americans in our major cities—internal expatriation. More and more of them are retiring from business while still young and moving to Maine or Vermont, to the Eastern Shore of Maryland, to Virginia. Although their reasons are various, I should judge that many of them have given up on America and on the cities of their birth and heritage. I remember how, going to Virginia for a speaking engagement during the sixties, I was struck by the great numbers of Goldwater posters I saw along the highways. I was told that the area was filled with Yankee millionaires who had retired there.

But the vast majority of the WASP establishment is not at all reactionary. In fact, although no figures are available, I have the impression that they are becoming more and more liberal. Parlor populism has

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infected social registerites to almost the same extent as it has the rest of our deracinated and guilty elite. By far the most perceptive review of my *Protestant Establishment* was written by Richard L. Rubenstein, then the campus rabbi at the University of Pittsburgh. He opened it with a description of candidate Barry Goldwater speaking to a WASP audience out on the Main Line in Philadelphia. The "half-Jew" Goldwater, basing his appeal "primarily on a single underlying issue—Protestant nativist racism," told his audience "that the government had been in the hands of 'minority groups' for the past thirty-two years . . . and promised, if elected, to restore it to political power." What Rabbi Rubenstein did not say was that in that election many predominantly old-stock WASP election districts on the Main Line voted the Democratic ticket for the first time since the Civil War. Again there are no statistics available, but that same old-stock upper class (not the newly rich elites) not only did not vote for Goldwater but did not vote in their habitually large numbers for the Republican party under Nixon.

I happened to spend the fall of 1972 at Cambridge, Massachusetts—the only state that gave more votes to McGovern than to Nixon. Massachusetts is, I should imagine, a state heavily populated with members of the old-stock upper class. The faculties of all the private schools and small colleges are predominantly WASP, and Boston is still basically an establishment city—except for the Irish. At a dinner on election night, I noted that of the owners and staff of a famous Boston newspaper, owned and run by an old-stock fashionable family, all but two were for McGovern. Perhaps when a class is losing power, its social and political attitudes become both more and more liberal and more and more reactionary. This bipolar trend indicates not only a loss of confidence but a certain amount of guilt and self-hate. As Durkheim pointed out years ago, guilt and self-hate are products of a too-rapid rise on the social scale and also a steady decline. No wonder radical chic is espoused by many members of our modern American elite. After all, A. Whitney Ellsworth, the publisher of their favorite sheet, the *New York Review of Books*, is a graduate of Saint Paul's and Harvard.

Finally, it was in the generation of the grandsons of the robber barons that the Protestant establishment lost its intellectual leadership in America. Ideas are infinitely important to all established authority. John Maynard Keynes saw this; "soon or late," he wrote, "it is ideas, not vested interests, which are dangerous for good or evil." De Tocqueville noted this even earlier when he wrote of the castelike character of the Old Regime in France: "An aristocracy in the days of its strength does not merely conduct affairs; it still directs opinions, gives their tone to

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writers and authority to ideas. In the eighteenth century the French nobility had entirely lost this part of its supremacy." The generation of American writers who were born within a decade of 1900, if they went to college, mostly attended Harvard, Yale, or Princeton. Like their spiritual ancestors in the generation of Emerson and Hawthorne, who witnessed the decline of the New England Puritan and Federalist establishment, these writers went on to produce our second American renaissance. And their books, between the lines, foretold the decline of the WASP establishment of which they were a part. F. Scott Fitzgerald—who, in his description of Gatsby's parties, first envisioned the kind of elitist society that is now upon us—was a Catholic by birth, but his father was of old Baltimore stock. Fitzgerald's insights into life within the establishment were perhaps due to his role as a half-insider.

In striking contrast to the WASP supremacy of the twenties, the intellectual climate of the sixties was mainly dominated by members of the New York Jewish establishment. True, those Jews were alienated from the WASP establishment by ascription, but the old-stock intellectuals were also alienated from their own inherited class values. Throughout the postwar period, in fact, intellectuals born within the establishment renounced their ancestral allegiance to the Republican party and became liberal Democrats. In Philadelphia, for example, Americans for Democratic Action (ADA) was founded largely by social registerites, in a house where the family of one of the founders had lived for three generations.

In an issue of *Commentary* magazine devoted to the "Failure of Nerve in America," S. M. Lipset brilliantly shows how an adversary intellectual class, or "intelligentsia," has grown up in postwar America. Modeled on the intelligentsia of Old Russia, or of continental Europe between the two wars and today, this class is very different from the traditional British and American pattern in which intellectuals are critical but are not cut off from the establishment by birth or heritage. Lipset quotes the late Lionel Trilling, a man keenly aware of the importance of established manners and civility, who wrote in 1965 that "any historian of the modern age will take virtually for granted the adversary intention, the actual subversive intention, that characterizes modern writing."

The alienation of the intellectuals from the establishment in the third generation of the robber barons' descendants had, in my view, a subtle but profound effect on their sons and daughters. Radical social change is a very slow process. As Walter Bagehot once pointed out, the con-

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sequences of the Reform Bill of 1832 were not really felt in England until the 1870s, when a new generation came to power. So although the decline and eventual disintegration of the American Protestant establishment originated with the robber barons' grandchildren, it was *their* children who felt its full force in the 1960s. They knew, as children so often do, what their parents were not ready to tell them.

To begin with, one must see that this fourth generation was media-bred rather than class-bred; these children watched television from their cradles. Yet I, who represent the third generation, can vividly remember hearing a voice talking in a friend's living room, and finding that it came from a newfangled gadget called a radio. The point is that in my generation members of all classes and ethnic groups grew up in various ghettos that were closed off from the rest of the nation and the world at large. For example, a man who several years ago was managing editor of the local Philadelphia newspaper came from a leading family in Independence, Missouri, and went to the University of Missouri during the 1930s. Years later, when he was a Neiman Fellow at Harvard, he kicked himself for not going to Harvard in the first place. But then, he said, he had never heard of Harvard in those days of class, ethnic, and regional isolation. At that same time, there were a lot of things that young men and women leaving Harvard or Yale or Vassar or Smith had never heard of—protected as they were by a class-bound upbringing of dancing classes, private schools, chaperons, debutante parties, and a childhood in the select suburbs of American cities along the Eastern Seaboard.

The democratization and atomization of the fourth generation of upper-class youth began in the colleges during the 1950s and gradually filtered down to the secondary and elementary schools, even the kindergartens and preschools, by the 1960s. Thus, in the course of the postwar decades, first the colleges and then the lower schools that had been class institutions before the war became elitist meritocracies. Both among the children of the upper class and the children of newly successful families striving to enter the upper class, the conscious and unconscious inculcation of class values was replaced by meritocratic values. The earlier emphasis on character and moral standards slowly gave way to a universalistic and critical attitude that questioned all particularistic values.

The meritocratic changes in education during the 1950s had a great deal to do with the campus revolutions of the 1960s and 1970s. Along with these changes was a growing public awareness that a bureaucratic and highly technical society such as ours needs more well-trained members of the elite and less unskilled labor. While our high school population increased dramatically between the two world wars, it was, as is well

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known, the college population that boomed in the postwar period. In 1940, Princeton had some 900 applicants for 600 places in the freshman class; in 1960, there were 3,312 applicants for 757 places, and the competition increased throughout that decade. To handle all these applicants, the meritocratic device of SAT scores was adopted, instead of the old class background and "character" (usually WASP or WASP-like), as a major criterion for admission. The result was that the 1960 freshman class at Princeton, with its 650 SAT average, represented the top 2 percent of its age group. No longer could a certain professor say of the freshmen in his class, as he had in 1940, "It was like a room full of siblings." No longer did 60 to 70 percent of first-year Princeton students come from private schools. The freshman class in 1935, of which John Kennedy was a member, included 502 young men from private schools as against 113 from public high schools. By 1960 the proportion of privately and publicly educated students was equal, and by the end of the decade public school graduates outnumbered those from private schools 60 to 40.

As I have said, the great-grandsons of the robber barons were unable to restrict their choices to Eastern Seaboard colleges. In 1935, all but a handful of the graduating class at Saint Paul's went on to Harvard, Yale, or Princeton. Thirty years later, in 1965, of the 102 boys in the graduating class, 22 went to Harvard, 13 to Yale, and 7 to Princeton. The rest—save 9 who had other plans—went to 24 other colleges. And that class of 1965 was more competitively selected, better educated, and far brighter than their fathers had been in 1935. Thirty-nine percent of them were commended or were semifinalists in the National Merit tests, and Charles E. Bohlen, Jr., was selected as one of the 121 Presidential Scholars for that year.

Until the Second World War, then, Princeton, Harvard, and Yale were still engaged in giving a liberal education to the sons of the upper class, and also assimilating some youth from less privileged backgrounds into that class. At Princeton and Yale, and at Harvard under A. Lawrence Lowell, these young men were, in the words of Woodrow Wilson, being educated to "serve the nation," and many of them, like Kennedy, Stevenson, Chester Bowles, and McGeorge and William Bundy, did. By the end of the sixties, however, these three class colleges had clearly become nurseries of elitist meritocracies, more in the style of the University of Chicago and the great public universities like the University of California at Berkeley and the University of Wisconsin at Madison. These changes were, of course, all in accord with the national anti-establishment mood of the country, which was bound to replace class and

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regional diversities with a national egalitarian and elitist uniformity. Conformity to class conventions slowly gave way to a uniformity that was, if possible, enforced by the laws of the state—as de Tocqueville would have predicted more than a century earlier. In this other-directed and conforming age of uniformity, it is no wonder that John V. Lindsay, when mayor of New York, found it expedient to refer to his "high school in New Hampshire" rather than Saint Paul's.

While the main reasons for the turmoil on the best campuses in America during the 1960s were the black revolution and the war in Vietnam, it would not be an exaggeration to suggest that the turmoil was also closely related to the decline of the WASP establishment and the rise of other groups, especially the affluent and newly suburbanized Jews, to elite status. Nevertheless, in viewing the generation gap within the old-stock upper class that resulted in its children's radical behavior, let us bear in mind that throughout the sixties only a small minority of students were, as the saying went, "radicalized." Although in stable times students have always held more or less the same political opinions as their parents, those of the 1960s moved steadily away from the values of the Republican WASP establishment. For instance, in a 1960 presidential straw poll taken at Harvard, John F. Kennedy received 60 percent of the vote—more than Franklin Roosevelt or any other Democratic candidate had ever mustered on that campus since the Civil War.

The trend among Harvard students to pull away from the political party of their ancestors was best illustrated when eighteen-year-olds got the vote in the early seventies. At the time, according to S. M. Lipset and David Riesman in their *Education and Politics at Harvard,* 80 percent of the Harvard students reported that they were registered to vote: 9 percent of them Republican, 34 percent independent, and 56.5 percent Democratic.

In the late sixties, the student meritocracy at Harvard was very much like Princeton's—the ratio of students from private and public schools being a similar 40 and 60 percent. Harvard had of course been heterogeneous and meritocratic for a longer time, with its proportion of Jewish students higher than at Princeton and far higher than in President Lowell's day. In this connection, it is important to stress one factor in the generation gap within the upper class: the brighter young people were far more opposed to a general, blanket anti-Semitism than were their parents. Indeed, opposition to anti-Semitism was even stronger among the daughters than among the sons. In Philadelphia during the 1960s, upper-class marriages revealed that an unprecedented number of the daughters of the Protestant establishment were marrying Jews. These

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young women also seemed to be from the more intellectually curious families. As the Scarlett-Rhett romance in *Gone with the Wind* illustrated well, spirited women of a declining class have probably always been attracted to enterprising young men who are rising in the world. The role of women in the 1960s revolution of class relations, during which the deans of admissions at the elite colleges replaced the debutante ritual in deciding who should marry whom, is itself a fascinating story. But for a clue to the values and attitudes of the brightest sons of the fourth-generation WASP establishment, let us look at the behavior of private school graduates at Harvard in the late 1960s.

The Berkeley campus revolution came in 1964, Columbia's in 1968, and Harvard's in the spring of 1969. The book on Harvard by S. M. Lipset and David Riesman includes a study of all the student revolts on that campus since the "Great Rebellion" of 1823, when John Quincy Adams's son John was expelled. "Harvard's year of the 'bust,' 1968-69," write these two authors, "was the most momentous year in the University's history in the century since Eliot took office." The history of that second Great Rebellion in 1969 has been thoroughly documented and need not be gone into here. But one thing is worth stressing: it was the sons of the WASP establishment who finally occupied the central administration building—an act that led to President Pusey's disastrous summoning of the local police.

Student radicalism at Harvard, as on most other campuses, was led by members of SDS. Students for a Democratic Society was founded at Port Huron, Michigan, in 1962, and its Harvard chapter was by 1966 the largest in the nation. One of its founders at Harvard (his father was an ADA Democrat and a member of the Kennedy administration) was a great-grandson of James Stillman, John D. Rockefeller's banker. By the time of the rebellion, the Harvard SDS had broken into two opposing factions, as left-wing movements often do: the more conservative SDS caucus and the more radical PL group, linked to the Maoist Progressive Labor party. From our point of view, the most useful description of the contrasting roles of these two wings in the 1969 "bust" is found in the book *Push Comes to Shove: The Escalation of Student Protest* by Steven Kelman, a student at Harvard between 1966 and 1970. Kelman came to Harvard as a convinced socialist and was the leader of the Young People's Socialist League (YPSL) on the campus. From his first day there, he strongly disapproved of, indeed despised, the "pallid preppies." "On the second day," he wrote in his diary, "I saw a tall, blond, not-quite-fat kid around the dorm. . . . One time he was gazing down at the rest of the world from his pedestal on the ledge of the staircase one

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floor up, and once again, later in the afternoon, downstairs. His eyes eyed me in a superciliousness so classic that I felt like photographing it. The lips seemed delicately positioned so that he could voice his contempt without saying one audible word. . . . Disgusting *prep school* kid!" This reversal of the kike-on-sight syndrome held by private school boys in the 1930s prevails throughout the Kelman book. Young Kelman somehow never seemed to apply the "preppie" epithet, however, to preppies of Jewish background, some of whom were his friends.

"Who's in Harvard SDS?" Kelman asks, and immediately discards the Freudian approach in the Yale psychologist Kenneth Keniston's "sycophantic account in *The Young Radicals.*"

> As more of a follower of Marx [Kelman writes], I think it would be useful to apply a class analysis to the sole phenomenon to which SDS refuses to apply this method: themselves, of course. Family income: average for U.S., $8,000 a year; average for Harvard, $17,000 a year; average for SDS, $23,000 a year. (Source: poll of family incomes taken in Soc. Sci. 125, an SDS-run course taken almost entirely by New Leftists.) Secondary school education: of the 150-odd Harvard students arrested after the occupation of University Hall, approximately 50 percent attended prep school, with the largest representation from the most exclusive ones like St. Paul's. Just over 40 percent of the Harvard student body as a whole comes from prep schools.

Kelman divides the affluent SDS membership into the "hereditary left," which dominated the SDS caucus, and the Maoist PL group, made up of preppies whom he calls "WASP rebels." The SDS at Harvard, according to Kelman, "never could have gotten started without the initial services of the hereditary radicals." This group became radical in the same way a Boston Irishman's son becomes a Democrat—by instinct. Their fathers had come of age in the thirties and were now members of the increasingly affluent American intelligentsia. According to Kelman:

> Irving Howe estimates that during the thirties and forties a million Americans may have passed through membership in the Communist party. Many are still radicals, if only under the table—or, to put it more accurately, at the dinner table—today. Around these talkative dinner tables the hereditary radicals absorbed from early childhood certain notions about who the bad guys and who the good guys are. . . . The hereditary radicals came to Harvard with their political commitments already well established.

Although the hereditary radicals founded and kept SDS going at Harvard in the 1960s, they lost out to the Maoist PL leaders in the April 1969 rebellion—the taking over of University Hall and the calling of the

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police by President Pusey. Thus, according to Kelman, "almost none of the leaders of the New Left caucus, up to and including SDS co-chairman Kazin, were arrested. . . . The hereditary radicals tried to conceal their fears in a hocus-pocus of SDS rhetoric, . . . but the real source of their hesitancy was easier to understand . . . they might get jail and expulsion. That was more than Mom and Dad had led them to bargain for."

The hereditary radicals "combined the confidence and optimism of members of a rising social group," says Kelman—and, one might add, the sophisticated caution born of the experience of their fathers. The WASP rebels, on the other hand, seemed to have many of the characteristics (perhaps in the extreme) of most of their declining class. Kelman reflects on his WASP rebel classmates as follows:

> The sight of an aristocrat who has lost the will to live is esthetically degrading. These declining members of the American aristocracy are not at all similar to the standard aristocratic stereotypes. They are neither self-confident men at the top, uncaring of those below, nor the humane, social-service oriented democratic aristocrats. . . .
>
> The Left should normally expect [Kelman continues] good strong hostility and opposition from the upper class—the enemy is nothing if not powerful. If some aristocrats want to rebel, though, that's their right. But the pale, delicate face of the used-up aristocrat who goes into SDS reminds one of nothing so much as Spengler's *Decline of the West*. The American upper class has been an aristocracy produced by primitive dog-eat-dog competition, and it is only now that enough generations have passed for it to begin to produce soft, declining offspring who are not "up" to its standards. . . . It is in the guilty aristocrat that we see clearly politics not for politics' sake, but for self-expression, the possibility of recapturing a lost vitality that one feels too weak to create for oneself.

The "declining aristocrats," as Kelman calls them, were all members of PL, not a "single one of them in the New Left caucus." But it was the PL preppies who carried their convictions—shallow and temporary as they were, and born of their declining self-confidence and frustration—to the ultimate conclusion in taking over University Hall, and being brutalized and arrested in doing so. The occupation of University Hall by the "pallid preppies" was a vital, symbolic event in the history of class relations in this country. Nothing since the *Protestant Establishment* was written, I should imagine, better illustrates what was happening to the WASP upper class, especially in its fourth generation. Imagine the reaction of the Harvard clubmen in their fathers' and grandfathers' generation had they witnessed "virtually everyone around the exclusive clubs wearing red armbands," as preppie David Bruce, Kelman's room-

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mate in his sophomore year, reported to him during the bust.

Kelman's views of his despised preppie classmates may seem to say more about his own relations with his ideological peers than about them. But perhaps his views were not so far off base. Four days after the occupation, the executive editor of the *Crimson* "bared his soul, in the proud *Crimson* tell-it-like-it-is tradition, with a piece entitled 'Non-Politics on the Battlefront.' " The following excerpts cannot be faulted as coming from an anti-prep-school point of view:

> What was most euphoric was us and what we were to each other. We *were* brothers and sisters. We did reach out and hold onto each other . . . we were very human and very together. . . .
>
> None of the above is very political stuff. But there was a group of us in University Hall who were not very political people. It was a strange group, not well-defined at all, that included some girls, some people from the Loeb [Drama Center], a couple of guys from the Fly Club, at least one from the Lampoon, and one in a tuxedo who had just come from a party and was drunk. There were others. Some of us didn't even know what the six demands were. . . .

The executive editor of the *Crimson,* a graduate of Saint Paul's, as was his father before him, had everything that meritocratic Harvard now looks for. He was a good athlete, very popular, and a top scholar. Not long after Kelman's book was written, this wealthy and gifted preppie took his own life. One wonders what will happen to the rest of the gilded Harvard youth who led the rebellion that spring.

What will happen to freedom in the fourth generation from the robber barons which dropped out and rebelled in its youth during the late 1960s? Their problem partly reflected a severe crisis of class authority in America, highlighted in a series of tragic events from the assassination of President Kennedy to the Watergate affair. It would be too facile to blame the current decline of authority in America, or the tragic fate of the editor of the Harvard *Crimson* in 1969, entirely on the suicidal, exclusionary values of the WASP establishment. Perhaps the very strengths of an establishment in one generation preclude its functioning successfully in another. At any rate, when I wrote the *Protestant Establishment* during the administration of President Kennedy, I still had faith in the ability of the WASP establishment to assimilate talented men and women of other ethnic and religious origins into its ranks. I have no such faith today. I remain convinced, though, that modern republican, political institutions, in both England and America, have traditionally been based on hierarchical social systems where class authority and the threat

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of class ostracism have been major agents of social control. A free press is a vital virtue in any democracy; like all virtues, however, it becomes a vice when carried too far and the fear of media exposure becomes the major sanction of a normative system. An authoritative establishment, in the long run, is far more important to the protection of freedom and democracy.

But perhaps it is best to forget about the WASP establishment, and instead cultivate an open but hierarchical society where all men aspire to be like Washington or Jefferson, rather than one in which all men must overtly ape the values of Everyman, all the while covertly coveting the shallow comforts of affluence and power. Not long after the decline of the Federalist establishment (of which the "Rebellion of 1823" at Harvard was a symptom) and the rise of Jacksonian democracy, de Tocqueville pointed out the affinities between materialism and egalitarianism, from which the following lines are taken:

> There is in fact a manly and lawful passion for equality which incites men to wish all to be powerful and honored. This passion tends to raise the humble to the rank of the great; but there exists also in the human heart a depraved taste for equality which impels the weak to attempt to lower the powerful to their own level.

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The Horse

Richard Dankleff

So alert—they claimed—that no man
would ever see him standing.
(Big Bow knew one man had.)
The old talkers' Great White Steed
roamed the Llano Estacado
like a ghost horse—and alone,
too proud, they said, to herd
with mustangs. (Big Bow counted
in the white stud's own manada
twenty mustang mares.)

Their Great Steed couldn't be hurt—
the old men claimed—by arrows
or even hunters' bullets.
(But in the beginning Big Bow
had found him gunshot in the hoof.
Big Bow cut out the slug,
then healed the wound with moss.
The big horse was his secret.
Killing time between raids,
he'd track down his horse and ride.)

A natural pacer, steady,
and swift as a bird—they claimed,
correctly. Clucked to, he paced faster
than the little mustangs galloped, and gracefully,
with Big Bow proud on his back.
But when they said the Great White Steed

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would never break his pace—
that maybe he *couldn't* gallop—
the old fools did not know
what Big Bow knew
with his hands hooked
in the thick mane, his eyes
squinting to slits
(O that white eagle flew),
black hair swept
straight back,
jaws clenched on
a whoop!

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The Home Place

Greg Kuzma

We never went anywhere.
We sat and listened to stew bubbling.
We sat and watched the skeins of darkness
unwind under bushes.
If we got up we got up to move the rocker
back a couple boards.
We never said anything.
If we said anything it was always
weather this and weather that.
Father would sit and think about it.
Mother would fold her hands
into her lap.
She was always getting ready to relax.
The wind blew.
But it never went anywhere.
It was always coming down
out of the west to beat against the house.
Nor did the house move.
Year after year it sat there fading
or letting its paint fall down like dandruff.
The wheat stayed out in the fields.
After it collapsed and rotted
the same tired birds got up
and flew into a clump of trees
to raise their young.
The dog barked at them then he died.
The cat came back from being lost.
Then disappeared.
Father said I think it'll rain.
And then it rained.

GREG KUZMA's latest book of poems is entitled *Good News*. He edits and publishes the Best Cellar Press Pamphlet Series and the poetry magazine *Pebble*.

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The Dynamics of Popular Intellectual Change

JAMES HITCHCOCK

DESPITE THE AMERICAN BELIEF IN PLURALISM, society is virtually never in a state of equilibrium with regard to competing social philosophies. New ideas are almost always bought at the expense of old ones, and the marketplace of popular ideas is not infinitely expandable. Ideas and movements are either in the ascendancy or in the decline; they cannot remain stationary. Hence conflicts over moral and social values are commonly perceived by participants, even if they do not fully realize it, as battles for survival. Often familiar positions are reversed; defenders of the status quo suddenly become outsiders, bewildered and demoralized by their new situation.

Recent American history has been marked by certain changes in popular attitudes that, though difficult to measure, may be the most significant events of our time. Old beliefs and old institutions are now more distrusted than at perhaps any time in our history. There is a significant class of persons who appear ready to accept, at least provisionally, almost every new idea, and who correspondingly tend to be at least mildly alienated from what has been regarded up to now as the mainstream of American society. The mainstream, meanwhile, appears to be getting narrower and more sluggish, the tributaries more numerous and friskier.

The list of such changes could go on endlessly, but a few of the more obvious manifestations of recent intellectual iconoclasm would include the following: that America as a nation is morally soiled in its dealings with both foreign peoples and many of its own citizens; that American economic achievements are at best ambiguous, both morally and in terms of the welfare of the citizenry; that American political institutions no longer work as they should; that sexual activity apart from heterosexual marriage is morally right and should be socially respectable; that traditional family roles and family authority distort the personalities of those involved; that church membership is unimportant and belief in God per-

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haps irrelevant to human living; that the wisdom of the past is largely superstitious and empty; that self-gratification (without harming others) is the proper purpose of human existence; and that institutions (of whatever kind) tend inevitably to inhibit such gratification.

The dynamics of public opinion—especially the process by which beliefs that seem deeply held are suddenly thrown off with little apparent regret or agony—remain largely unexplored. Since America is at least a quasi-democratic society, changes in social values have to percolate up from below, in the sense that broad popular acceptance (not necessarily by a majority) is required for social respectability. There are no institutions (the Supreme Court perhaps comes closest) capable of simply decreeing such changes. Nonetheless, all these changes originate, in virtually every instance, with a numerically almost insignificant minority. At its inception a minority view may seem almost absurd to the majority; the stages by which it becomes respectable are roughly as follows:

Public exposure. Here the role of the media is obviously crucial, and the mistrust of the media felt by many Americans has much to do with their awareness of this. The media, by noting some movements while neglecting others, go a long way toward determining which new ideas will gain acceptance and which will not. Whether they portray a movement in a friendly or a questionable light is important but not decisive.

Timeliness. Victor Hugo's famous remark about the power of "an idea whose time has come" has been endlessly quoted in recent years; an unfamiliar idea must somehow seem appropriate to its time before it will begin to gain acceptance. The process by which some new ideas fail as premature while others succeed is mysterious, but it appears to have much to do with dramatic public events that arouse attention (for example, Sputnik in the 1950s and Watergate in the 1970s).

The crucial middle. There are people in our society—mostly rather obscure people whose influence, in many cases, is unrecognized even by themselves—who effectively act as intellectual referees. They judiciously separate acceptable ideas from untenable ones, the possible from the obviously specious, the "interesting" from the stale and sterile. Some of them—journalists, teachers, clergymen, politicians—have public influence, but many more have an influence only within a limited local circle. Each is therefore individually insignificant, yet because they exist in every community, they are collectively important. In general, these people have reputations for being thoughtful, solid, balanced, and temperate in their opinions. They may in fact be thought of as slightly stuffy and overcautious (as were professors and clergy not many years ago). Nevertheless, when they change their minds on particular social questions (as by turning against the Vietnam War or deciding that mari-

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juana should be legal) they create perceptible ripples, even without intending to.

Defections. After the judicious middle has decided that a new idea is at least worthy of a hearing, some within their ranks will move beyond mere tolerance—first to mild sympathy, then to active espousal. Such conversions may be few in number, but they have profound psychological effects on others in the middle, and appreciably shift the entire axis of discussion.

The myth of inevitability. The new movement's impetus has maximum force to the degree that it convinces the larger society that it has already won its victory and that continuing opposition is futile and foolish. It may moderate its positions in the hour of victory, but successful movements manage to convince even many of their critics that they were fated to succeed. Sometimes the unthinkable becomes the commonplace within a few years (for instance, unmarried cohabitation among college students, or the respectability of abortion), and even those who retain reservations about the new idea come to feel that opposition is pointless.

Running through this scenario are certain threads that are quite familiar in the fabric of American thinking, and serve as hidden ways by which iconoclastic notions are legitimized in traditional categories. One of these is belief in progress, the American assumption that, on the whole, change brings improvement and that a relatively stable existence implies backwardness. Although most Americans may be morally conservative and politically cautious, few are genuine reactionaries prepared to fight what they perceive as rearguard actions against social trends that, though possibly viewed as dubious, are also seen as irreversible. For many people, too, the success of a new idea is proof of its legitimacy. Through media attention, the unfamiliar soon becomes the acceptable.

Belief in progress, which carries with it the strong implication of inevitability (as in the popular description of a conservative as someone who has to be "dragged kicking and screaming into the twentieth century"), conjoins with the idea that changes are made because they are morally right, because people of goodwill have chosen to make them. The rightness of the new must be proven in terms of its moral superiority over the old.

Success was so often taken as proof of moral rightness that for a long time the successful entrepreneur was held up as a moral as well as an economic model. In one sense this may be mere rationalization, one of the rewards that history bestows on victors. But in another sense it is crucial to the triumph of new movements that they successfully make moral claims on society, that they somehow touch the consciences of at

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least those intellectual referees possessed of liberal instincts. Somehow, rather illogically, change comes to be rationalized both as inevitable and as freely chosen.

Any new movement must also have the ability to touch the moral nerves of at least some of those in the establishment it hopes to displace. The cynical view that power or status is never surrendered voluntarily is only partially correct. Certainly in modern America there are numerous examples of members of various establishments who came to doubt their own legitimacy and connived in their own disestablishment. (Such cases are especially numerous among college professors and administrators.)

Yet this process goes much deeper than merely reaching the consciences of those who are in a position to legitimize change. For some in the new movement the aim, sometimes not consciously recognized, is the total discrediting of the older establishment. The need of the new group to assert itself, its quest for psychic *Lebensraum,* and its desire to avenge old injustices combine to produce an aggressive movement which will carry the battle against the entrenched enemy as far as it can be taken, limited only by the ultimate degree of resistance it encounters.

The established group, poised on the verge of decline, is plagued by having a history, and particularly a history that is public knowledge. Since no people lives its history over any length of time without accumulating various crimes and blunders on its record, a history can become a burden and an embarrassment, a source of continuing and demoralizing self-doubt. Most peoples interpret their histories in a favorable way. Under attack, however, the interpretation becomes increasingly implausible; the heroic myths previously subscribed to become all the more poisonous as they are discredited. Thus, if the pioneers of the American West were not superhuman, they must have been murderers of Indians and rapers of nature. If American foreign policy in the postwar world has not been a consistently disinterested defense of freedom, it must have been a massive conspiracy to defend hidden capitalistic interests.

Established groups also suffer loss of self-confidence from the simple human tendency to run out of energy over a period of time. This is true even when fresh leadership is periodically injected. If an establishment has had its own way for too long, has faced no really trying challenges, it may lose the ability to respond. If traditional ideas have simply been accepted as self-evidently true, attacks will induce panic and doubt among many who have always believed in them.

The feeling of debilitation—that oneself, one's group, or one's values no longer possess vigor and energy, lack the capacity to inspire dedication and creativity—is one of the most serious maladies from which an establishment suffers. People in such a condition often develop an ex-

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travagant admiration for those who seem to possess the qualities the establishment lacks: energy, clear-sightedness, strength of will, firmness of purpose, vitality, dedication. The virtual youth-worship that spread through much of the liberal middle class in the later 1960s is the most recent major example of this. Black militants and Third World revolutionaries have also been beneficiaries of this Western bourgeois reflex.

Finally, the American belief in fair play enters the equation, in that many privileged persons seem to feel that they have enjoyed the benefits of their positions long enough and owe it to others to cede place to them. Some people seem to sense that their time in history is over, and they are prepared to move aside deferentially for those they recognize as their successors.

This entire process is a self-reinforcing one: the more the establishment is attacked and subjected to hostile scrutiny, the more likely it is to suffer growing self-doubt and demoralization. The ability of the attacking movement to keep up a steady barrage, its apparent indefatigable resourcefulness, the variety of fronts on which it operates, the zeal and seeming hatred with which it maintains the fight—all tend to frighten the defenders of the bastion, who sense a lack of comparable will and resources within themselves. The ascending movement forces the establishment to fight a purely defensive war. Media attention focuses on the attackers, who appear more interesting and dramatic than their opponents, and the aggressors' very ability to get and hold attention is taken as yet one more sign of their legitimacy.

A demoralized establishment does not necessarily surrender to its enemies precipitously. But lacking real confidence in its own rectitude, it may fight dispiritedly and without imagination. It may rely on purely physical defenses (for example, during the late 1960s summoning the police during a campus demonstration), partly because it cannot face a direct moral and intellectual confrontation with its critics. In some cases (the White House during the Watergate years), the establishment appears to sink into pure cynicism, abandoning any real belief in what it supposedly stands for and preoccupying itself with simply holding on to power as long as possible.

In some cases, an establishment may attempt to pacify its attackers by offering significant concessions and obsequious, humiliating acknowledgments of its own failings. Radicals are understandably suspicious of the possibilities of betrayal in such offers, which are often more than tactical. Establishment leaders may see their own survival, and the survival of the institutions they represent, as dependent on the infusion of fresh blood and energy from the rising movement. Their willingness to accede to critics is sometimes akin to the excitement that staid

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middle-class people have experienced at being on the fringes of, for example, the youth culture or militant black groups. There is an almost palpable flow of electricity from the new to the old.

This same dynamic applies to rising and falling ideas as well as to political movements, in that the proponents of new ideas tend to personalize what they oppose. Thus they make it easier to attack (for instance, to reduce traditional family values to a matter of "male chauvinism"), and many defenders of traditional values react in the same way as leaders of established institutions—progressively losing confidence in their own beliefs or concluding that resistance is futile.

At each historical moment there is a kind of unwritten social scorecard on which the fortunes of various movements, and various ideas, are charted. Instinctively, though not always consciously, particular movements are noted as either rising or falling, particular ideas as either ascendant or passé.

These rankings are of major importance because, also unconsciously, society (or those who function as the intellectual referees) maintains different sets of rules for rising and falling movements or ideas. Whether a movement is in the ascendant or descendant category is largely recognizable from its behavior and the judgments society makes about that behavior. Movements that appear to be on the rise are expected to behave differently from those in decline, and for the most part they do.

An infallible sign that an idea or movement is about to enter its decline is a feeling expressed by key individuals among its adherents that it is "oppressive," or "tyrannical," or inhibits personal development. This "desertion of the intellectuals," as Crane Brinton characterized it, eventually pervades the movement, spreading self-doubt and resentment against the discipline that has hitherto been exacted. (If, on the other hand, the desertion of the intellectuals fails to cause wider repercussions, the group is obviously not on the verge of decline and the revolt will be easily smothered.) These differences can be analyzed according to the following categories, among others:

Self-fulfillment/self-sacrifice. People generally find self-discipline, sometimes even heroic self-sacrifice, tolerable if they believe it is for the sake of some larger purpose. Resentment directed against groups to which they belong or ideas to which they supposedly subscribe (such as the institution of marriage) indicates effectively their loss of belief in this transcendent meaning. It is related to the decline of energy and creativity, as people find it increasingly difficult to summon up these beliefs in a fresh and vital way. Their past, especially, goes dead on them.

It is also generally true that widespread resentment against the "oppressiveness" of the old group—the family, the church, or the school—

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will not occur while the group is at the height of its authority and power and is capable of stern disciplinary measures. Rather it occurs when the group has already been significantly liberalized and its authority, in fact, is but a shadow of what it once was. What the members resent most is not its tyranny but its patent weakness; the slight remains of its once heavy burden are what most gall and annoy.

Community/individual. Individualism—each person's primary concern with his own gratification—tends to emerge from the breakdown of social groups. This is in contrast with the new ethic of communalism generated by rising groups, in which the individual feels privileged to make sacrifices for the sake of the group; consider the obsessive concern to thwart ego trips or personality cults in many radical movements.

Hedonism/puritanism. An instance of the previous dichotomy, this division has been especially significant in recent years because of the sexual revolution—itself an apparently rising movement seeking to displace residual American puritanism. Rising movements, especially those that are revolutionary about political and economic matters, are usually puritanical. They regard an excessive interest in sex as an unhealthy preoccupation with personal satisfaction, and they believe sex should be controllable for the collective purposes of the group, such as encouraging or discouraging large families. And a sophisticated society tends to respect in rising groups the very signs of prudishness that it ridicules in declining groups. Milton Himmelfarb has pointed out that feminists can successfully condemn pornography while self-respecting liberal clergymen no longer dare do so. A classic conservative myth, dating from practically the fall of Rome, holds that sexual indulgence weakens a society's moral fiber and thus precipitates decline. More probably, a sexual revolution signifies a growing preoccupation with purely private happiness, indicating that attachment to the *res publica* is already on the wane.

Cynicism/credulity. Growing disenchantment with the declining group easily slides into cynicism—about the motivation of the group's current leadership, about the "real" meaning of its beliefs (the traditional belief in the family as a mere cover for male privilege), even about much of its past, however glorious (the view of American history as almost two centuries of imperialist conspiracy). Members of the group who consider themselves "enlightened" or "liberated" take it as a mark of honor to be skeptical of all the group's claims, and immune to its propaganda.

It is also a mark of sophisticated people, however, to be simultaneously realistic, even to the point of cynicism, about some things while remaining willfully credulous about other things. Thus, the discontented within the declining group are inclined to take most of the rising group's claims at face value and to entertain a romanticized and idealized view of

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its history. Precisely because members of the declining establishment feel debilitated and demoralized, they are eager to embrace uncritically the apparently vital and purposeful new group.

Passive/aggressive rhetoric. There is perhaps no surer sign of a group's imminent decline than the unwillingness of its spokesmen to talk confidently and aggressively in public about its purposes and beliefs. At a certain point, these spokesmen will discover that ideas and styles of expression that had been generally accepted for some years are now having a negative effect, not only on the public but on many of their members. Critics of this rhetoric will stress its alleged excessiveness—it is too bombastic, too obviously smug, too much given to clichés, too sweeping, too lacking in irony. Generally in such a situation either the leaders learn to modify their rhetoric, sometimes drastically, or else they are replaced by new leaders who dissociate themselves symbolically from their predecessors.

The adoption of a rhetoric that is low-keyed, soft-spoken, diffident, relatively subtle, tentative, and even apologetic is motivated often by tactical considerations—the desire to salvage the group's image and show that it can adapt to changed conditions. There are, however, significant costs to such adaptation. The new rhetoric is unable to inspire or reassure even the group's own members, thus contributing to its further decline. It is unable to make the group seem attractive to potential converts. It may silence critics, but only because they sense it is no longer worth bothering about. Its subdued new public image is taken as evidence that its critics are essentially correct in their charges and that it consequently deserves to continue its slide into oblivion.

Conversely, not only are rising groups permitted (and in fact expected) to employ rhetoric that is aggressive, extravagant, often pompous, insulting toward enemies, and grandiose in its claims, but such rhetoric is taken as a sign of a group's legitimacy and the rightness of its claims. Here again the importance of the media is central: groups that are unable to get and hold the spotlight are deemed unworthy of sustained public attention. Such obscurity is taken as evidence of a fatal debility or lack of conviction within the group itself.

Sophistication/primitiveness. Within itself, a group close to decline is characterized by a growing sense of irony, self-mockery, boredom, restlessness, and a feeling that everything it stands for is now too familiar to be fully believed. Rising groups, in contrast, possess a freshness, enthusiasm, wholehearted belief, almost childlike energy and eagerness. Once again, although these characteristics are applauded in a rising group, when adopted by the declining group they are ridiculed or regarded as dangerously fanatical.

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Complexity/simplicity. A major mark of sophistication is the awareness that reality can be so obscure and complex that sure and certain judgments about it are difficult to arrive at. And that awareness, carried past a certain point, may well induce agnosticism, bewilderment, and inertia. As a dogma of faith (one of the most basic of the modernist cultural movement), this sophistication works constantly to erode traditional beliefs and loyalty to established groups. Every attempt to reassert traditional ideas is met by the objection that the group's view of reality is "simplistic" and that it fails to take account of the relativity of all beliefs.

Rising groups must of necessity eschew any such perception of reality; otherwise they would lose momentum, loosen their hold on the conscience of society, and weaken the allegiance of their own adherents. Their claim to attention may be that they perceive simple but profound "truths" that society has preferred not to acknowledge—for example, that history is essentially an imperialist or a male chauvinist conspiracy. Their freshness, vigor, dedication, and clear-sightedness, so admired by sophisticates, must be maintained by a willfully naïve (perhaps even cynical) view of reality.

Ecumenism/messianism. The ideal that one can be fully and deeply committed to one's own beliefs, while at the same time totally respectful of other people's, is extraordinarily difficult to achieve in practice. Those who believe that they know *the* truth, or a particular truth, must try to propagate it, since it would be uncharitable to leave other people floundering for want of correct knowledge.

Groups that become diffident about their own beliefs in the public forum, that renounce the desire to make converts, that profess to see broad areas of agreement between themselves and other groups and admit there are many roads to the same destination, that acknowledge the dogmatism and rigidity of their past—these are usually groups that have begun to doubt their own legitimacy at some profound level. (The rise of the ecumenical movement in modern Christianity is clearly not unrelated to this development, nor is the growing uncertainty about missionary activity on the part of many religious denominations.)

Rising groups succeed precisely because they claim to have *the* truth and are able to convince significant numbers of people that they do. They are expected to be messianic, apocalyptic, dogmatic, intolerant, and to condemn those who disagree with them. They place great emphasis on correct belief and correct action, and are quite willing to expel and condemn deviant members.

Because they take their beliefs with great seriousness, these rising groups are prone to schism and internal fragmentation, generally arising from quarrels over the authenticity of particular doctrines. Such frag-

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mentation, if it becomes excessive, can seriously cripple the movement and even destroy its effectiveness (as may have happened to the New Left of the late 1960s) but a certain amount of factionalism can also be a sign of health.

It is perhaps symptomatic of the declining vitality of both Christianity and Marxism in the West that dialogue between these two movements has been undertaken in recent years. Little is heard of organized, irenic discussions between feminists and male chauvinists, for example, or black militants and white racists, or pacifists and American Legionnaires. Often a rising group will reject meeting with even sympathetic and conciliatory representatives of "the enemy," for fear of being taken over or subtly contaminated.

A declining group will, virtually by definition, be characterized by a significant number of defections from its ranks, while a rising group will attract converts. The media play an important role by giving publicity to such movements, which helps to inform the public that a particular group is either rising or falling. In the 1950s, publicity was given to notable converts to the Catholic Church; in later years this was replaced by stories about defecting priests and nuns.

Positive/negative. An established group whose legitimacy has begun to decline finds that an image of negativism—moralistic, restrictive, condemnatory, puritanical—is a severe handicap. It must even learn to affirm ideas that may run counter to its own official beliefs, as when churches seek to come to terms with the sexual revolution. Rising groups, on the other hand, often base much of their program on strongly condemnatory ideas about the existing society, and do not hesitate to pass sweeping moral judgments on whole classes of people or on the entire history of a nation.

Scholarship and the arts. There is a broad modern consensus that art and scholarship must be independent of socially imposed orthodoxies, and that artists and scholars will often function as social critics. In a declining group, the intellectual may feel virtually obliged to stand in judgment on established beliefs. A historian may set out to debunk the popular myths of his country, or a theologian to question the official dogmas of his church. Rising groups, on the other hand, search for a usable past. The art and scholarship they inspire may frankly aim at supporting the official group ideology. Their artists and intellectuals tend to accept the role of serving the group's needs. Art may be openly propagandistic, dealing with themes currently deemed relevant to the group's historical situation.

The paranoid style. The historian Richard Hofstadter noted the persistence of the "paranoid style" in American history: the tendency of

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particular groups (right or left) to interpret events in terms of conspiracies and make other groups the scapegoats for all social misfortune. In general, a sophisticated society frowns on conspiratorial theories of history, and ridicules or is alarmed by any establishment that fears plots against itself. Rising groups, however, tend to see history precisely in terms of conspiracies (men against women, the old against the young, capitalists against workers), and the intellectual referees regard these perceptions as having some validity.

Procedure/substance. Most established groups have developed complex and myriad procedures for dealing with all manner of problems. These procedures take on a life and a worth of their own and to a degree become sacred—for example, the liberties guaranteed by the United States Constitution as interpreted by custom and court decisions. Many people, therefore, regard violation of these procedures as morally wrong, worse than the evil whose remedy is sought. This happens even when the violation is in a good cause, such as punishment of a dangerous criminal.

Rising groups tend to be impatient with established procedures, using those that lead to desired results and readily violating others. Thus, for example, they may curtail academic freedom or the right of free speech on campus in order to prevent "reactionary" views from being aired. All this may so confuse the partisans of traditional procedural safeguards that they remain silent or offer only feeble protests.

Persuasion/coercion. The belief that a secure and self-confident society can be perfectly tolerant of dissent exists chiefly as an ideal, and is rarely met in reality. A broadly tolerant group is in fact more likely to be one whose members have begun to lose confidence in their own values and whose leaders are confused as to its future direction. A rising group, on the other hand, is often not loath to use elements of coercion—not only an aggressive and domineering rhetoric but actual physical pressure, such as breaking up opposition meetings or shouting down opposition speakers. Again the intellectual referees may be confused and silent.

Ordinary/special language. A declining group is likely to conclude that part of its difficulty is in its failure to communicate adequately with the larger society. To remedy this, it will attempt to expunge all special language from its public statements (and often from its private discourse as well). It will tailor its messages as much as possible to what it thinks the larger society is willing to accept. At the extreme, it simply ceases to have anything distinctive to say and is content with echoing commonly held opinions. It will also eschew distinctive clothing for the same reasons.

Rising groups are almost always characterized by the use of a special language—even a jargon—and one sign of a group's acceptance is that it

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forces the public to learn this language and perhaps adopt parts of it. (The youth culture of the later 1960s introduced any number of unfamiliar words and phrases into the adult vocabulary.) A special language is, as the linguist Basil Bernstein has demonstrated, an important element in group solidarity. Thus, the use of such language reinforces a rising group's cohesion, while the declining group's abandonment of it hastens its own dissolution. Rising groups do not hesitate to use language unfamiliar to the general public, because they believe they possess a unique truth that the public needs to learn. (Rising groups also find their dress styles being widely imitated.)

Personal morality. If representatives of declining groups are discovered to be engaged in questionable personal behavior, such as adultery, excessive drinking, or embezzlement, these failings may be interpreted as signs of the group's corruption. (In films and the theater, the corruption of German life before Nazism has long been represented by scenes of orgiastic debauchery and sexual fetishism.)

Leaders of rising movements may choose to keep their personal lives in the background or bring them into the light. The choice may well depend on whether what they do in private is irrelevant to their public roles or possibly, if colorful and unconventional, a sign of their vitality and independence.

Particular groups and particular ideas have undergone the above processes repeatedly throughout history. Periodically, however, a whole society experiences this crisis, when practically all its values and institutions are called into question simultaneously. If it is plausibly urged that all aspects of the society's life, from its foreign policy to its sexual mores, are subtly interconnected—then whatever doubts develop in one area will in time spread to almost all other areas.

The workings of this dynamic can be examined with respect to a few key instances in recent American history:

Chinese communism. Westerners in considerable numbers have reacted to the Chinese experiment with willful credulity and unabashed admiration. Although few would suggest the relevance of the Chinese model to America, there is a commonly held belief that it may be a more appropriate model for the rest of the world than the American model. America is thought to have become obsolete, save for its brute military capabilities, while China may represent the way of salvation for much of the globe. There are obvious parallels with an earlier and similar Western admiration for the Soviet Union.

The recurring appeal of communism in the West stems largely from the dialectical relationship between a "hard" culture—one that de-

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mands discipline, self-sacrifice, and devotion to social goals—and a "soft" culture that encourages self-fulfillment, individualism, and personal pleasure. Eventually a hard culture is always vulnerable to the blandishments of a soft culture, as its people tire of unremitting discipline and look enviously at the seemingly carefree happiness of their neighbors. The material prosperity that a disciplined culture often achieves may well undermine this spirit of discipline.

Yet once a hard culture has succumbed to the blandishments of a soft culture, many of its citizens will have periodic attacks of guilt. Intellectuals in particular, for whom the pursuit of personal gratification eventually comes to seem shameful and crass, will seek models of a hard culture that reveal more challenging human possibilities. Added to this is Marxism's claim to be in tune with the dynamics of history—a claim that, if taken seriously, dictates disengaging oneself from the declining society, even if only spiritually.

America. Intellectuals were perhaps in an untypical mood in their willingness to celebrate American society and its world role for twenty years after 1945. Much of this attitude was based on the belief that America represented the genuine wave of the future, standing for political freedom, economic efficiency, enlightened responsibility, and overall modernization. For essentially the same reasons intellectual elites in many parts of the globe were attracted to what America represented. America was the great model in the struggle against "backwardness."

The radical turning against this idea, so marked in the past ten years, is obviously related to the American defeat in Vietnam at the hands of a "backward" enemy. Hence America is perceived as a loser rather than a winner, a society whose influence is clearly on the wane. Its values and institutions are regarded as having little significance for the rest of the world. In accordance with the principle that an established group makes room for a rising group by being itself pushed aside, various movements of the Third World now occupy the attention of intellectuals both here and in other countries and are thought destined to rise.

Youth. In essence, the youth culture of any society is a pure and classic example of a rising movement, since its members are certain of eventually displacing their elders, who are equally certain of passing from the scene. The full implications of this were felt in the late 1960s, when young people (at least on the campuses) displayed all the characteristics of a self-confident rising group, and key members of the adult world showed the classic symptoms of a declining one.

The youth culture still exists, but it has lost much of its aggressiveness and no longer inspires fear and awe in adults. Its rather swift loss of momentum is somewhat mysterious. Probably this stems from the dis-

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covery of how confused and demoralized many young people themselves were behind their facade of dogmatic confidence. Many adult admirers were disappointed at this revelation and began looking elsewhere for rising groups to identify with.

Blacks. Although, unlike young people, blacks are not certain of eventually coming into their own, organized black movements, in the past ten years especially, have shown most of the characteristics of a rising group, and many white people have in turn reacted toward them as do typical members of a declining group. Many white adults have paid blacks and young people the supreme homage a declining group gives to a rising one: imitation—in speech, in music, in dress, in mannerisms. Many white adults also, for a time, counted themselves blessed to the degree that they were accepted into the black world or the youth culture.

In conjunction with the Third World, organized black movements in America still show many of the signs of groups that may in time inherit the earth. They have, however, experienced some temporary stalling of momentum, owing mainly perhaps to close encounters with elements of the white world (lower middle class and working class) who do not think of themselves as part of an established declining group, and hence do not respond positively to the usual rhetoric and tactics of the rising group.

White ethnics. This is a broad and imprecise term for the white working class and lower middle class. White ethnics remain a problematical case, since to date they have largely failed to exploit successfully the strategies of a rising group and have so far failed to arouse sufficient guilt and self-doubt in the upper middle class for it to behave toward them like a declining group. On the other hand, the white ethnics are also extremely important because of their apparent immunity to the usual appeals that a rising group makes. In fact, white ethnics generally react negatively to these appeals, as revealed by their opposition to compulsory school busing, affirmative-action programs, and many aspects of the youth culture. The reason for this reaction is that white ethnics do not think of themselves as an established group, hence do not feel the guilt that is so large an element in the dynamics of rising and falling. This in itself has significant implications—some of which are certain to be felt before the decade is out.

Current political rhetoric tends, temporarily, to move away from the implications of this rising-falling dichotomy, which had been dominant since about 1960. There is a sense of consolidation of changed positions. However, American society is too volatile, and the habits of thinking here described too much a part of the whole apparatus of mass communications, to render this cessation more than temporary.

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The Future of Classics

GEOFFREY S. KIRK

THE REASONS FOR STUDYING CLASSICS TODAY are not precisely those that once made this the exemplary form of liberal education. We no longer need to do Latin and Greek in order to become philosophers, priests, historians, or artists—or just to become educated. We do not even study them because the Western cultural tradition is rooted in the ancient Mediterranean world, although that is not irrelevant. We study them, perhaps, because they constitute a great corpus of complex, well-integrated, and humane knowledge whose exploration and understanding challenge mind and imagination alike. It may be something like that, rather than the merely traditional role of classics in the college curriculum, or the dedication or self-interest of classics teachers, or the inclination of some students for the remote and unusual, that underlies the relatively healthy condition of the subject in the United States. If so, then the future looks bright not only for the survival of a traditional part of learning but also for American liberal education as a whole.

To be less complacent and more realistic, I imagine that classics owes its present position, diminished but not yet precarious, as much to ancient privilege and sheer inertia as to its intrinsic merits as material for advanced study. Even to claim its status as less than precarious may be too optimistic, at least at a time when all humane education could be shaken by an additional folly or two in the Middle East or one more shift of public opinion with respect to technology and vocational training. It may be that America is sounder here than Britain—that the value of humane education is more broadly acknowledged and more closely protected by institutions in America than in a country that is temporarily confused by its own traditions and preoccupied with the needs of materialism.

And yet classics is exposed everywhere, in America no less than in the nations of Europe, to a simple fallacy that becomes dangerous whenever nonvocational education is called into question. The fallacy is that Greek

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and Latin subjects are less *practically* useful than English, philosophy, or history. The truth is, of course, that they are neither more nor less useful. Very nearly the whole gamut of the humanities is, in the lowest sense, utterly useless—classics no more so than the rest. And yet English and history, at least, continue to attract huge numbers of students, and are regarded by them, as well as by their parents and society as a whole, as relatively innocuous—necessary, if faintly eccentric. The study of classics, on the other hand, is regarded by most people as utterly wild, eccentric and anachronistic to the point of madness. If only society, and parents not the least, could be persuaded to see that the study of classics is on an exact par with other humane subjects in respect to vocational assets, then the future of Greek and Latin studies at all levels would be sensationally improved. That leaves unaffected the threat posed by the social sciences to all the literary disciplines—but I assume, perhaps too optimistically, that this will correct itself in time.

Even so, of course, classics would not attract nearly so many students as are now drawn to English and history, because classics is considerably more difficult as a subject. Most students are, not unnaturally, more interested in easier than in harder options, and the task of learning exotic foreign languages is apt to deter even the more responsible among them. American students show signs of being less easily put off than their British counterparts (who have their own counterbalancing virtues); and at least a few of them seem to be attracted not only by the unworldly aspect of classics but even by its apparent difficulty. This difficulty is a key factor in the future study of classics, and needs closer definition. It can be broadly reduced to the fact that a proper classical training entails learning two moderately hard languages, one of which has an unfamiliar script and both of which are "dead." The strange script can be learned in a week, and hence is a difficulty more apparent than real. "Dead" is an unfortunate term, implying as it does that the languages are also desiccated and moribund, which is the case with neither Latin nor Greek. But they are not, indeed, spoken as living languages, and that makes things more complicated. One cannot send one's students for junior year abroad to ancient Sparta or Mantua, or even to learn the language of love with young Clodia or Aspasia—and that is a serious disadvantage. Moreover, our knowledge of the way Greek works as a language, although extensive, is here and there incomplete, especially in the dialect forms that complicate the study of its literature. The actual texts we read in Greek, and to a slightly lesser extent in Latin, are inaccurate in places and have to be restored and explained in learned footnotes. All this makes Greek and Latin hard to

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acquire compared, say, with German or Russian, and difficult to master. Since very few professional scholars can read Greek really fast, it is hardly surprising that very few undergraduate students nowadays ever reach the point of being able to read an ancient Greek text fast enough to bring the kind of satisfaction and understanding that books normally give—unless they have more or less learned it by heart as a prescribed text, a notoriously equivocal occupation in itself.

There are many other things in a classics course besides language, important as it is; and here classics as a subject is not much harder than its equivalents in other cultures. By this I mean that studying ancient philosophy is not very different from studying philosophy generally (except that it tends to be more laboriously historical), that Greek and Roman history are no different in kind from many other forms of history, and so on. It is true that there can be special complications even in these fields, not so much because of language barriers as because of the fragmentary nature of the evidence. This is a problem in other cultural studies too; but Greek, which is unusually fascinating, also presents unusually large gaps. Heraclitus of Ephesus was palpably a fertile and fundamental thinker, but one is severely handicapped, almost crippled, by the sparseness of his surviving work—a mere hundred or so brief sayings and a few pages of second- or fifth-hand reports. Plato, by contrast, survives more or less complete as far as published writings are concerned. Yet there are crucial things we need to know, and cannot know, about his thought and development, things that would be clear enough had he worked in the seventeenth century A.D. instead of in the fourth century B.C. The study of Greek and Roman history is fascinating, but it differs from that of periods and places for which the documentation is much fuller. Greco-Roman archaeology is, by its nature, a study of incomplete fragments and no different from that of the Aztecs or Huns in that respect. (It is infinitely richer, however, in two important ways: by the comparative wealth of other evidence to fill out the purely material record and by the greater depth and complexity of the culture whose concrete aspects it reveals.) As for the literatures themselves, perhaps we should, after all, concede that there are one or two special difficulties extending beyond those of language: not only corrupt texts but also the gaps in understanding of the social and religious backgrounds, more serious for Aeschylus than for Shakespeare.

These special complications in the nonlinguistic aspects of classics are less than overwhelming, and they are far outweighed by the special advantages of classical culture as a focus for intensive study—for example, that it has achieved so high a level in each of its main depart-

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ments, or even that the reconstruction of literature and philosophy out of fragmentary materials has its own special challenges and rewards. But that still leaves us with the problem of the classics student who ends up being able to do little better than crawl through a text, line by agonized line.

I am afraid this is no fantasy of mine, but a stark reality. Most classics students, both here and in Britain, really are like that, even in their final year. How much of a failure that represents for the subject depends on how much emphasis has been placed on the ability to read Greek and Latin and, correspondingly, on how much useful non-linguistic learning has occurred. Roughly speaking, the more traditional institutions cling the hardest to the language element in their courses, as perhaps they should. Classics departments in other universities for many years have had to adapt to the problem of students with a poor grounding in the subject as a whole, and have therefore been forced to develop other sides of the curriculum while plodding on with language teaching as a minor activity. Cambridge, Oxford, and the Ivy League colleges, on the other hand, are only now facing up to the decline in the linguistic attainments, if not the intellectual quality, of their students, and here the language-trained classicist who ends up not being able to read the languages in any significant sense is a frequent phenomenon.

This is the skeleton in the classical closet. It must be exposed and then decently interred if that rosy future I began by predicting is really to come about. There can be *no* future in training people to do something they turn out not to be able to do. How, then, should the problem be overcome? Two different strategies present themselves, and many institutions will be likely to settle eventually on a combination of both. The first is to "face facts," and play down the language element—to continue teaching the languages up to a point (to the point, for instance, at which the student can refer to a key sentence or paragraph in a literary, historical, or philosophical text and comprehend it with the help of dictionary, grammar, and translation), but only as a minor component of the whole course. That is what has already been done, with Greek at least, in many small departments; and that is what Harvard and Cambridge, Oxford, Yale, and Princeton (and Berkeley, Michigan, Toronto, London, and a dozen others, to be sure) refuse to do. As the language component declines, the study of classical culture in other ways correspondingly increases—through translation or through concentration on aspects like archaeology, philosophy, or history where large-scale reading in the original is less crucial than it is in literature. That is one strategy. The other is to improve, somehow, the language-

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learning capacity of students—and that means by fresh methods and attitudes in teaching rather than merely by greater emphasis on the language element or more draconian methods of enforcing it.

Let me consider this second, more traditional strategy first. It is traditional in the sense that the aim remains unchanged: that of teaching students to read Latin and Greek. Also, there has been constant adjustment of teaching methods over the last fifty years, ever since the subject lost its preeminent place in the school curriculum, in order to try to make good the losses in early training. Yet past adjustments have failed to keep pace with the decline of literacy and of the special linguistic skills. New methods are certainly needed, including the use of tapes and living-language techniques, and the standard textbooks in Greek and Latin, though admirable, should be substantially improved. Many classics departments have been using their own materials and procedures—usually makeshift and more or less unsatisfactory—and a serious joint effort is needed to create improved full-scale courses, with special grammars, texts, and tapes, for both Latin and Greek. In Britain, a Latin course for children aged fourteen and older, produced in Cambridge under the auspices of the Nuffield Foundation and the Joint Association of Classical Teachers (to which most school and college teachers now belong), has been successful, although more so in the nonlinguistic than in the linguistic aspect with which I am concerned here. A Greek course intended for older beginners, including college students, is being evolved at present, also at Cambridge, and looks promising; it will rightly have a much stronger linguistic emphasis than the Cambridge Latin course. McGill has produced a Greek course that is controversial to say the least, but it has its enthusiastic followers. Soon a Latin course will be needed that caters to grown-up students rather than schoolchildren. This is the general direction in which collaborative effort is needed, rather than in the production of fancy new lexicons with or without the aid of computers (I do not question the scholarly value of some such contemporary endeavors, merely the amount of time and money devoted to them). I hope and believe that the effort will be successful, and that ten years from now it will be notably easier for students to learn Greek and Latin than it is at present.

There are other factors apart from, for example, slowness at acquiring vocabulary and grammar. All language learning, modern as well as ancient, is of course suffering from the widespread subliteracy to which I have just alluded. Many students arrive at college without having acquired the habit of continuous reading. Many have lost the art of reading books, and some of them, even if they choose a literary subject at the

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university, have no real inclination to study it again. Freshman courses that require wide reading in any language can be a great help to classicists, not only in giving them a taste of other literatures but also in improving their ability to read anything at all. But from there on, they need far better assistance than most existing teaching methods have provided, in order to overcome some of the special problems of a dead language. For example, they need to be able to *speak* Latin and Greek, to themselves and in class, with a kind of fluency, or at any rate comprehensibility, and without hesitation. In Britain we do not even have a unified pronunciation of the two languages, although that problem is slowly being resolved; in America the conventional pronunciation of Greek is sloppy. There should be far more reading aloud in class, far more old-fashioned "learning by heart," in order to generate a sort of associative assimilation of word and phrase that picking one's way through written syntax does not provide. One essential by-product will be that students will learn (at last) the sounds and rhythms of Greek and Latin poetry, among which the greatest treasures of the two literatures are to be found.

Before becoming excessively pedagogical I had better turn to the first of the two strategies I mentioned: giving up an advanced knowledge of the languages as a bad job and concentrating on other aspects of the ancient world. This is what is euphemistically known in the modern curriculum as "Classical Civilization" or "Classical Studies"—that is, classics in translation with varying degrees of elementary language study thrown in. The emphases of such courses can be significantly different. One view regards nonlinguistic classics as an area study of the ancient Mediterranean world, primarily historical and sociological (and therefore with heavy emphasis on archaeology) and only secondarily literary and philosophical. There is no doubt that the ancient Mediterranean region provides an outstanding focus for such an approach, especially if it is extended beyond the Greco-Roman world into ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia. Another view is that classics should remain literature-based, as in the traditional course, but that the literature can be read in translation without unacceptable loss. According to this view, the chief emphasis will obviously be literary, with philosophy, history, and so on occupying their traditional roles as special aspects of ancient culture as a whole. I am exaggerating the position a little here, perhaps: historians and philosophers would not accept their subject as in any sense secondary. But in most American universities, after all, the specialized study of ancient philosophy and history is remitted to the philosophy and history departments, whereas classics departments tend to regard their role as

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primarily to teach language (with the degree of success we have seen) and, above all, literature. In Britain it is more common for all aspects of the classics to be taught within a single department. At Cambridge, for instance, that department supplies the related needs of other departments where classical options exist—a reasonable system for just so long as historians and philosophers are willing to share, up to a point, the teaching of language and literature, which is not always the case. Certainly the British arrangement emphasizes an assumption that is probably correct for the traditional curriculum: that literature should form the core of the first half, at least, of any self-respecting classical course, with specialization in history, philosophy, or archaeology coming later. The case is somewhat stronger in Greek than in Latin; for Greek poetry, especially that of Homer and the dramatists, is an indispensable study there, and technical prose works—despite the great literary interest of Thucydides and Plato—are less important, comparatively speaking, than in Latin. Tacitus, for example, although primarily a historian, is one of the outstanding literary figures of the Roman Silver Age.

It is true that I write as someone whose main professional concern is with literature; but for many years I specialized in Greek philosophy, forming an interest that widened into myths and religion, with early Greek archaeology as another, though less special, concern. I have no disposition to make classics into a purely literary study; that would be absurd. Yet classics without literature is like *Hamlet* without the Dane—not so much because literature is a main (though very incomplete) source for human attitudes without which history and even philosophy can scarcely be understood at all, as because one just cannot think seriously about any aspect of ancient Greece without thinking, and feeling, seriously about Homer or Sophocles, or of ancient Rome without a real understanding of Vergil or Horace. I do not exclude Plato from this company—but I think of the Plato of *Phaedo* and *Republic* rather than of *Theaetetus* and *Sophist*.

Still, once the literature has to be studied mainly in translation, there is much to be said, however regretfully, for limiting the centrality of its role. There is no need to rehearse yet once again the respects in which a great work of literature, of poetry above all, depends on its language, and to dwell on the barriers interposed by even the best of translations. There are famous exceptions, but no substantial translation from ancient literature comes anywhere near the original. It is entirely right that the art of translating should be studied more carefully than before, and the making of translations that are as nearly perfect as possible is an urgent task for those qualified to carry it out—which entails, as some

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translators seem not to know, an intimate understanding of the language. That still leaves a large problem: that many of the essential nuances of an ancient work of literature either are likely to disappear in the process of translation, or can only be paralleled in a version so loose as to sacrifice other important qualities of the original. Those who believe that a full and direct appreciation of a great literature is one of the highest aims of humane education may conclude that, from the point of view of literary understanding (rather than comparative literature synthesis), it is far preferable for a student to study *any* great literature in its original language—provided he or she can read it rather well—than to study even the greatest literature in translation, however relatively good the available translations may be.

This does not mean that I condemn the whole Classical Civilization movement. Far from it. Rather it means that I prefer those versions of the movement that do not set out to place special emphasis on literature but aim at an overall view of Greco-Roman civilization that sees literature as one important part of a complex cultural organism that equally involves history, politics and sociology, religion and philosophy, and material remains. History, like philosophy, depends, to be sure, on original sources, but it is their content rather than their detailed expression that is most important. With literature the two are inseparable. An incomplete knowledge of Latin and Greek, which is all that most students end up with under the present dispensation, remains useful for the close study of crucial passages in a historical or philosophical text; it may well *not* be useful for the assimilation of a work of literature (unless perhaps it be a miniature one, like a Horatian ode). It is not my intention to depreciate the literary value of Plato or Thucydides, or to imply that the understanding of Plato's thought does not depend to a certain degree on the ability to appreciate his language and literary intentions. The fully equipped scholar can deal with all that, if he is lucky enough to have literary taste as well as historical and philosophical skills. Most students, however, may comprehend both the technical and the aesthetic aspects better if they digest large masses of Plato's work mainly through translation, rather than flounder around in a mere two or three dialogues in the original Greek.

What I am recommending has the effect, in the short run, of devaluing the literary part of the whole classical curriculum until the teaching of the classical languages picks up again. In any event, students will continue to read in translation, and should be encouraged to do so more than at present, in Britain at least. Meanwhile the language skills will not be lost. There are enough teachers, and even a sufficient minor-

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ity of dedicated and linguistically sophisticated students, to see the subject and its literary refinements through a generation of adjustment and temporary limitation. Whether this sort of thing will actually happen is another matter; it is almost as likely that in Britain the required rate of change will not be achieved. Some of the older institutions there, Cambridge not least of all, are extraordinarily slow to change. Although this has saved the classical curriculum from the wilder excesses of the last fifteen years, it is dangerous when teachers and students alike see the need for change and yet somehow cannot bring it off without destructive delays and reductions. For when the changes do come, they tend to be uneasy compromises designed to avoid the obstructions created by die-hard conservatives—those, for example, who still want students to spend five or six hours a week translating Victorian poets into Latin hexameters or Greek iambics.

One hopes that the new teaching methods we are waiting for will arrive before the students have been finally disillusioned, or too many colleagues in other subjects have noticed that all is not well. Of course, there is an element of exaggeration in all this—or perhaps I mean that there is another side to the coin. In Cambridge, for instance, several American graduates each year are asked to take the last part of the undergraduate course in order to achieve the linguistic level they could not or did not achieve in their home universities. They seem to like many aspects of the British approach—but then they are often exceptionally gifted students. I hope we shall have more of them, because they tend to be both more obviously enthusiastic and more vocal than many of their British counterparts, and inject a bit of life into class work that is often, in Britain, well taught but rather stodgy.

British universities, then, have their own particular problems; some of them, strangely enough, are connected with the collegiate system for which Oxford and Cambridge are famous. But American universities have their special problems too. The flexibility of the American course system, with its ever-widening variety of choices both outside and within the major subject, has serious disadvantages as well as great virtues. If you look at the course record of a graduate of even the best American classics department, it is often extraordinarily, even comically, patchy: Stoics and Epicureans but no Aristotle, Sophocles but no Aeschylus and almost no Euripides, odd special periods in history without coherence or interconnection, concentration on postclassical authors with almost total weakness on the classical side, and so on. One of the dangers of this patchiness is that students who go on to do graduate work and then become teachers themselves remain very one-sided, indeed retain a

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warped view of the whole subject. The result is that classical courses sometimes fail to exploit the continuity and rich variety that are prominent among the exceptional qualities of Greco-Roman culture. British curricula do better here, although further improvements can be and are being made. Both systems, however, are in need of a more synoptic and a more humane approach, the lack of which reflects on curricula and teachers alike.

I have sometimes wondered whether classics teachers are more severe and humorless, as well as more complacent, than most others. There is something in the standard pattern of classical research that might encourage these qualities as well as a certain dry pomposity. One certainly has to try very hard, in the face of the grueling task of becoming adept at both Latin and Greek without losing touch with all the other parts of classical scholarship, not to become over-professional and pedantic. Moreover, an anachronistic paradigm of the Great Classical Scholar lurks always in the background, and encourages absurd posturings from the less well balanced of our bright young men (bright young women being commendably free of this disease, although in America, at least, they have discovered another to match it). Classical scholars undoubtedly take themselves and their subject very seriously indeed; sometimes it might be better if they were, not less serious perhaps, but at least more relaxed. We have no need to convince *ourselves* of the value of Greek and Latin studies, and the outside world might be better impressed if we were less prolix and pontifical in their exposition and more thoughtful in their defense.

Classical research, too, exhibits some similar characteristics. The journals are overflowing with the apparatus of learning but deficient in interesting or important ideas, and most new books are not much better. That does not exactly help the student who, when he comes to sample the current literature, often finds himself blinded by science, affronted by academic bombast and quarrelsomeness, and repelled by what appears to be, and often is, the worst sort of pedantry. At the other extreme there has been, over the last twenty years, a welter of books ostensibly written at the popular level. Perhaps a third of these are useful in some respect, with the remainder at best repetitive, unnecessary, and dull—a proportion that can be blamed only in part on the publishers. The present difficulties of academic publishing will have their compensation if they reduce the amount of superfluous classical work that still appears, and if "Publish *well* or perish" becomes the new form of a watchword that rings out nowadays almost as loudly in British universities as in American.

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One of the special characteristics of classical research is the tension between surviving exponents of "textual criticism" and those who feel that literary criticism is what is now needed. The classical scholar's most essential task from the seventeenth to the late nineteenth century was the establishment of reasonably accurate Greek and Latin texts on the basis of the frequently defective medieval copies; this is no longer so, for the main authors at least. Some surprising gaps have remained (Aeschylus is only now being adequately presented and explained), but it is mainly the second-rank technical works, apart from the continuing trickle of new Greek material preserved in papyrus fragments, that still require textual attention. Yet there are a good many scholars, more in Britain than in America, who continue to enjoy exercising the traditional classical skills of recension, emendation, and so on—and on the best authors. This is natural enough; but on the one hand it involves a degree of wasted energy and sheer repetition, and on the other it is often accompanied by the insinuation that these are the truly divine skills, with other forms of classical scholarship being inferior.

One can only applaud the close knowledge of the ancient languages that textual critics must possess in order to be any good at all, but the textual critics we now need are those who are also good literary critics—and that combination is even harder to achieve. Philological genius, for reasons that remain somewhat obscure, does not seem to accord easily with aesthetic interest and judgment; sometimes one suspects that it is incompatible with literary taste. Many scholars are trying to lay to rest this particular ghost, but the new literary criticism of the classics (despite urgent exhortations from the American journal *Arion*) is advancing only slowly. Its less reputable exponents are often innocent of the finer nuances of Latin and Greek, and they are the ones who tend to be most strident in their denunciation of the textual critics. Many of them are the product of the bizarre graduate school explosion of the 1960s in America; but on the whole the national boundaries of this dispute are fortunately becoming dimmer, and in many of the more important areas of classical research there is an impressive community of viewpoint as well as ability between scholars of different nationalities.

I dare say there are few long-established subjects in which the standards of research are higher than in classics—despite the criticisms just outlined and despite the special difficulties of the subject, the strain of operating in such a heavily worked field, and the frustration induced by popular incomprehension and indifference. Classical scholars can, therefore, afford to bow gracefully to the pressures that are at present making publication so much harder, and that I welcomed earlier for

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other reasons. It is not my wish to inhibit the really great scholars, but the rest of us could easily leave a little more for posterity to achieve. In compensation we could devote ourselves more amply to allied pursuits—not so much to formal teaching (which needs change of quality rather than quantity) as to reading more widely both in classical literature and outside it and to discussing in a relaxed and civilized way, among ourselves and with students, the crucial issues as well as the details of a subject that can be almost overwhelming in its range, depth, and complexity. This is something I personally have only been able to experience quite rarely in some thirty years of work in classics—for a couple of short periods at Cambridge University and for a somewhat longer period in New Haven. The pressures of ordinary curricula, the sometimes pointless competitiveness of academics, the eagerness of bureaucrats, even the obduracy of students who sometimes find it hard to pursue a middle path between the resentful and the ingratiating—all these things make the kind of humane discussion I have in mind surprisingly hard to achieve. And yet I suppose that without it university education in nonvocational subjects is hardly worthwhile.

These are some of the details of the problem. They are important because, if we neglect them, the broader prospect may fade silently away: the prospect, that is, that classics, having recovered a little from its decline, will continue to make progress—not to its old monolithic status, to be sure, or even to precisely its old form, but toward that position in the higher kinds of education to which its great inherent merits entitle it.

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The Light in Mexico

ANTHONY OSTROFF

The thin tourist lady said
she'd come to paint & paid her stout
guide to pay the quick kids
to stay, stay on the wide steps
of the broad church on the loud street
where she had stopped. Already she
was drawing lines as thin as hair
on her sketch pad. "They're sweet, but, oh,
you must be quick to catch it! Now,
the light!" Her fingers flew from her tray
of paint with its quaint water jar
& there on the paper a thin, pale wash
grew over her lines. It colored thin
children & thin steps that led
to slim doors from a still street.
"There!" she said. "Now the sky
is blue. I'll let that dry. Ooooh!"
And humming & muttering she drew
still thinner lines on her frail hues.
I watched her work in the thick light
of Mexico, the light that made
Orozco brown & red & black
& round, & made Rivera blunt,
& made Siqueiros passionate,
& thought perhaps the light was what
had made that lady, sweet
with love & money, paint
everything so thin.

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The Voices of Time in Music

AGNES CRAWFORD SCHULDT

WHEN WE SPEAK OF MUSIC AS A TIME ART, we usually mean no more than that time is necessary for music's unfolding. Is there a deeper connection between music and time? Does music, perhaps, reveal the perception of time in different philosophies, different cultures, different ages? In some primitive societies time was "boxed"; changes would occur in distinct stages, without continuity. It has been an ever-recurring circle in the Orient, a linear path in the Occident. In the seventeenth century, Isaac Newton described time as an absolute that "of itself and from its own nature flows equably without relation to anything external." To Albert Einstein, time was purely relative, inseparable from space. Time has been measured by the sun, the swing of a pendulum, the hands of a clock, the microsecond wink of a cesium clock. It has been a god to be worshiped, a threat of extinction to be countered by religion, a commodity to be bartered, sold, or saved. The many forms taken by man's perception of time have distinguished different cultures and different periods within a culture. Many of those forms have found a clear reflection in music.

Music can be driven by time or it can be static, a number of separate moments. It can develop as a life process, or it can be cyclic, returning to its starting point unchanged. It can head unswervingly toward a goal, or it can be labyrinthine and open-ended. It can be strongly physical in its accents and action, or it can suppress all regularity of pulsation, freeing mind from body. It can move in the dynamic time of Newton, in the four-dimensional space-time of Einstein, or in the unhurried time of the Orient.

The music of the last three centuries in Europe and America stands apart not only from the music of the Orient but from that of all other periods of Western culture. No Asian culture has known the harmonic pressures and the driving rhythms long familiar in the West. Nor did European music display such great dynamic energy before the seventeenth century or retain it after the nineteenth. The music of those centuries, so familiar that it constitutes Music to most listeners, is the art of the Newtonian age. Its creative life has not outlasted that age; it

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survives, happily, as a celebration of a great dynamic period. As the concept of time has changed with Einstein, however, so music has turned from the one-directional stream of absolute time to move freely in the realm of space-time.

Today music resists both the temporal pressure and the one-directional path of the Newtonian period. Musicians are more concerned with the placement and duration of sounds in space than with their flow in time. Interest lies in the qualities of the sounds themselves and the patterns formed, not in where those sounds are going. The arrow of time, dominant for almost three centuries, is missing in the music typical of this century.

Perhaps the use of the term "typical" should be qualified. The music that inundates radio and television, that blasts from fraternity houses in spring and draws crowds to rock festivals in summer, does not typify this venturesome century. Most popular music is conservative in means and nostalgic in mood. Like all popular art, it must retain much of the traditional language, the easily recognized and easily remembered. Its lyrics are concerned with the familiar, the near, the problematic or pleasant emotions of everyday existence. Its music keeps the fundamental harmony and the basic beat of the past, however enlivened by syncopated accents and ornamented by free improvisations of melody.

There is, of course, some interchange between the "popular" and the "new." But the music typical of this century's advancing frontiers of thought is found in the works of composers such as Anton Webern, Edgard Varèse, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Pierre Boulez, Elliott Carter, George Crumb. Each in his own way stills the pulse of time. The sounds in their music exist in space, creating fresh images of our world.

Men are not born with an awareness of time but acquire it slowly in childhood, in different forms in different epochs and on different continents. In Western civilization those forms of awareness have changed more sharply than in cultures more bound by tradition. And so it is with music. In other cultures, ritual and tradition have preserved an ancient style with relatively minor alteration. In the West, the musical languages in which composers have spoken show decisive change between the early and the late Middle Ages, again in the seventeenth century, and now in the twentieth, periods in which the perception of time has also been greatly altered. A closer look will show how sensitively music records the time-consciousness of each age.

In the early Middle Ages, time moved with the sun from day to night, from planting to harvest, from birth to death. Sundials were adequate to measure time in that agrarian society; time was too fluid for demarcation in small units. Recorded time was brief. By biblical reckoning, the

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earth was less than five thousand years old; its end was considered certain to come before it reached an age of six thousand years. Time on earth was necessary to the unfolding of God's purpose for man, but eternity would follow that life in time. Meanwhile time seemed to move unhurriedly on its path toward timelessness.

The music of those medieval centuries moved in the gentle waves of Gregorian chant. Its rhythms were fluid, irregular; it never touched down in accent. Each phrase took off on a rising impulse, curving up, then floating downward, but only to rise again and again until it stopped in accentless suspension, without closure. It had long notes and short notes but no regularly recurring metrical pattern. Melodies followed the irregular rhythms of the Latin prose texts. There was no pressure of time or action, no turbulence of emotion. Suppressing physical pulse, freeing the spirit for contemplation, this music was superbly suited to worship. The chants had been shaped by many generations of men and were sung throughout Christian Europe for many centuries. They were well matched to a period in which the sun was the only timekeeper and life flowed from birth to death through days of little change.

As the pace of life quickened in the later Middle Ages, time was marked off in hourly segments. The communal life of the monasteries was ordered by the striking of bells; the sounds rang out over the countryside to remind all men of the passing of time. In the growing cities, commerce and craft industries also called for orderly divisions of time and work. The first weight-driven clocks to record hours and minutes were, after long experiment, successfully built toward the end of the thirteenth century. These machines, too cumbersome for any but public use, controlled the famous cathedral clocks of the fourteenth century. They usually included astronomical features, making the clock an image of cosmic design as well as a means of measuring time on earth. The clock of Wells Cathedral, installed in 1392, recorded the days of the month and the phases of the moon as well as showing all twenty-four hours on its dial, each hour divided into minutes. Its automated knights, who still emerge on the hour, make the clock as popular an attraction today as it must have been when new. Time had become visible as well as audible; its passage held new interest, and its measurement new economic value.

In this same Gothic period, musical time came to be marked off in measurable, regularly recurring patterns. The common unit of time was divisible by three, "the ternary number being the most perfect number because it takes its name from the Holy Trinity, which is true and pure perfection," Franco of Cologne explained about 1260. The once-freely-flowing Gregorian chant was altered to a slow and measured foundation,

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above which added melodies could soar in faster but coordinated motion. The added voices were separately composed; each went its own way, but all met at regular points of stress. The triple measure of time ruled their intricate weaving, forcing accommodation of each to the others. No longer bending the notes flexibly to the words of a text, these melodies shaped words into the mold of time.

The typical thirteenth-century form, the motet, had three voices. The lowest (called tenor, from *tenere,* to hold) "held" the sacred chant in long drawn-out tones. The duplum, or *motetus,* above it paraphrased the text of the chant, using more words, more tones, and a faster movement. The triplum, in the same relatively high range but with its own rhythmic figure, might elaborate further on the text or might adapt a lively popular melody to the rhythmic measure of the other voices. The triplum might even, on occasion, be singing the praises of an earthly love in French while the tenor and duplum continued their song of divine love in Latin. But however diverse the texts and the melodies, all were brought together in an effective unity by measured units of time. As the growing complexity of the community of men required synchronization of action by the measurement of time, so in music the intricate weaving of separate melodies required a similar ordering.

This thirteenth-century music was a highly structured art, closer to architecture than to poetry or painting. It divided and ordered sound in time as medieval architecture divided and ordered the weights and stresses of stone in space. The Gothic motet and the Gothic cathedral both soar from a ground plan of tradition in layered stories, the motet in duplum and triplum above its chant, the cathedral in triforium and clerestory over the basilican plan of nave and aisles. The cathedral articulates space with rhythmic precision; the motet articulates time in the triple meter of its intersecting voices.

While the Gothic North continued to delight in abstract sound structures with complex divisions and refinements of measured time, in Italy the humanistic spirit of the Renaissance was shaping music toward a simpler, less constricted rhythmic flow. Whether serving heavenly or earthly pleasures, Renaissance music moved with serene grace. Each voice of madrigal, mass, or motet had its distinct and measured time but all blended in a movement without conspicuous accent. Words, which were lost in the complexity of Gothic counterpoint, were restored to importance. A new clarity and simplicity shone from the music despite the sophistication of its workmanship.

Similar changes were evident in the visual arts. Churches returned to human scale as architects abandoned the high vaults, the daring engineering, and the otherworldly symbolism of the Gothic to build churches

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that centered around the worshipers. Sculptured figures, freed from the architectural wall, took on individual existence. Artists painted their human subjects as three-dimensional bodies bathed in the light of earth. To Renaissance man the earth was still at rest in the center of the universe. And while the earth was thought to have endured, unmoving, for most of its ordained span, there yet seemed time for graceful living, for eager learning, and for the beauty that comes from harmonious proportion and elegance of detail. In the next century, time would stretch to a longer future and space would become infinite, but while the Renaissance lasted there seemed to be a new capacity for living within earthly space and time.

The seventeenth century brought radical change to music as it did to science, philosophy, and the visual arts. Motion was the revolutionary element, and time was the necessary measure of motion. Philosopher-scientists studied motion in the skies and on earth; visual artists created the illusion of movement in paint and stone. Music moved through time with a new and boundless energy, annexing new emotional territory on the way. Motion was the key to a new mode of thought.

The natural state of the universe is motion, Galileo said. The earth is not "a lump full of idleness," but moves about the sun even as the sun, too, moves. Galileo's German contemporary, Kepler, saw the world as a celestial machine, "something like a clockwork." In England, Hobbes considered the world simply as "matter in motion." In France, Descartes said, "Give me extension and motion and I will construct the universe." And then Newton put all this together in the scheme of an orderly, clocklike world system where the laws of motion and gravitation were the same for atoms, apples, and planets.

In this dynamic world of motion, time and the measurement of time acquired new importance. Galileo had found an accurate measurement in the swing of a pendulum. Christian Huygens incorporated the pendulum in a clock that marked fairly precise divisions of time into seconds, minutes, and hours. Clocks and watches became a common component of life and work, serving to detach time from its surroundings in nature. Time became money, and life, regulated by time, seemed to move at an accelerated pace.

Although time was now divided into small fractions, it also gained a lengthening future. If the world, set in motion by God, was thereafter a self-perpetuating machine, as Newton argued, then man's sins could not corrupt it. An imminent end of the world no longer threatened; the future beckoned to man, with his growing pride in his own power and intelligence. Men might be torn by conflicts of faith and reason, religion

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and science, yet they were exhilarated by the boundlessness of their world and their new understanding of it. The sense of power, the sheer power of knowledge, counterbalanced the strains of a difficult and divisive age.

The seventeenth century was above all a dynamic age. In the visual arts, the static symmetry of the Renaissance gave way to motion. Even stone was coerced into movement in the undulating walls of Borromini's buildings, with their alternating convex-concave curves. Bernini captured the instant of action in sculptured stone. His *David* of the seventeenth century is unconfined, caught in the rush of his attack on Goliath, while Michelangelo's *David* of the preceding century can still fit into the niche prepared for it. Rubens's brush captured the illusion of incessant motion and Caravaggio turned light into an active element striking dramatically across his canvas. The seventeenth-century world was imbued with motion, restless in its search for power.

In music the predominating trait was that of vigorous movement. As clock time was divided into minutes and seconds, so musical time was divided into persistently ticking figures of action. Not for this age was the serene flow of a Josquin des Prés mass or the untroubled pleasure of a Thomas Morley madrigal. Baroque composers abandoned the quiet, even flow of Renaissance music for the driving motion of a mechanically regular beat, subdivided for greater impact. Rhythmic momentum was soon reinforced by a system of harmonic progression that propelled the music on from the tension of dissonance to the relaxation of consonance. Rhythm alone has no necessary direction, but tonal harmony is irreversible; it points the arrow of time. Striding basses added urgency, while surplus energy overflowed in ornamental turns and trills of melody.

No other period, no other culture, has produced a music so imbued with directional energy. Baroque music is goal oriented, driving always toward its triumphant cadences, its final, emphatic closure. Time is irreversible, and irresistible in its steady march. By the period of Bach, music moved in an unbroken stream of sound so vigorous that it could be curbed only by the powerful cadences that eventually brought it to a halt. Relief came only in separate movements of free fantasia, recitative, or lyric adagio. Yet in this music as in Newton's clocklike universe, time did not imply change in an evolutionary sense. Newton's laws of motion were part of an unchanging order "created by God and conserved to this day in the same state and condition." In music the figures of action were also unchanging, filled with power but without development in a psychological or emotional sense. "It is necessary to maintain the same type of motion as long as the passion is being expressed," wrote Bach's contemporary, Johann Scheibe. The chosen

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musical figure represented a state of emotion, not a development. Its motion, whether dignified or impetuous, was to be maintained intact to its full duration.

Music retained much of this baroque energy for another century, though without the baroque's single-minded pursuit of one theme, one goal, one pace, and one rhythm. In the symphonies of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven, for instance, there are more points of rest, more levels of action, more human drama in the development of contrasting themes. After Beethoven there is a loss of sustained energy. The early romanticists excel in miniatures. Their melodies tend to open as if at midsentence, to favor the falling line, to drift toward an inconclusive end. But throughout the centuries of the Newtonian world, through the baroque, classic, and romantic styles, music retained two unifying premises: a tonality based on the gravitational attraction of a central key with a central chord in each key, and a metrical rhythm "flowing equably" from past to future.

In the last century of that Newtonian era, an increasing subjectivity, evident in all the arts, was manifested most clearly in music. Unhampered by external points of reference, music became in the nineteenth century the romantic art par excellence. In the early nineteenth century, Beethoven still spoke of and to mankind, but the composers who followed him were more concerned with the individual self and its idiosyncrasies, with what set one self apart from all other selves. They specialized in personal idioms. Schumann admitted that he did not want to be understood by everyone. Chopin's music, although it keeps a certain patrician reserve, is essentially a self-avowal composed for the instrument of greatest intimacy, the piano. Wagner, more imperious, used the full resources of orchestra and opera stage as instruments of his ego—to conquer, not to join, mankind.

Romanticism was, however, "a self-limiting disturbance," as Wylie Sypher says in *Loss of the Self*. "It created the self and destroyed the self." The separation of mind from matter, of man from nature, initiated by Descartes, reached its end result in the romantic self of the nineteenth century. Self-isolation eventually grew burdensome. In Brahms, twenty years younger than Wagner, the inward-turning melancholy of his nature fought against his veneration for the classic spirit of Mozart and Beethoven. Imprisoned in his own time, he betrayed in his music the yearning for escape. The note of nostalgia so evident in his music is the note on which the century and an era of music close.

The twentieth century opened to new sounds. The key to its music, as George Rochberg has cogently argued in the journal *Perspectives of New*

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Music, lies in the change from a primarily temporal to a primarily spatial character. "In the new music it is the image of space that predominates, an image in which the sound substance forms itself as the primary object of perception, its motion secondary, contingent on the structure of the sounding forms themselves." Pulsation is suppressed to allow the projection, the full realization of the sounds. "Time as duration becomes a dimension of musical space. The new spatial image of music seeks to project the permanence of the world as cosmos, the cosmos as the eternal present."

The new emphasis on space is matched by an increase in objectivity. New music, Rochberg says, "leans toward an objectified projection in which the composer's energies are focused beyond himself and the lyrical flow of his inner personal states." The eternal present is a spatial image; time no longer moves. "When man seizes on the present moment of his existence as the only *real* time, he spatializes his existence." On the other hand, for subjective man "life is an experience in which nothing stands still, nothing lasts, and the future beckons. Subjective man cannot transcend time; he is trapped in it." His music, the music of our immediate past, is propelled in time, captured in its image. Moving and breathing in the rhythms of man, developing from beginning to foreseen end, this music is ruled by the compelling pressure of time.

The new music has escaped this pressure. It no longer strides in a square rhythm or dances in a triple one. It no longer develops from past to future. It does not drive toward a predetermined goal. It cancels the functional family relationships of traditional harmony, freeing sounds to become entities rather than steps in a progression of chords. These new sounds radiate in space; their durations cannot be limited by mathematically measured units of time. They can be ruled neither by the clock nor by the human pulse. They exist in what Rochberg calls "a free realm of time." In that free realm, the composer is reaching beyond himself, beyond man, to the stillness of space.

To those saturated in the music of the harmonic era, the new music is as strange as Einstein's universe of space-time was to a world brought up on Newton's laws. Yet just as scientists, looking back, can see the steps that led to Einstein's giant step, so hindsight permits us to recognize early signs of a new era in music. From the turn of the century, we hear Debussy's "standing chords," unresolved dissonances that ignore the forward-moving pressure of traditional harmony, challenging its premises. These are sounds without consequences; they suspend both time and gravity. A little later come Arnold Schönberg's twelve-tone patterns, so purely spatial that they retain their identity when inverted, reversed, verticalized, and altered in rhythm. "There is no absolute down, no right

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or left, forward or backward," Schönberg said. His sounds move in a neutral musical space. Anton Webern's configurations of sound, even more clearly spatial, are scattered over spaces of silence. Each sound has a precise duration, but the durations do not combine to suggest a stream of time. The sounds are individual, discontinuous; they exist in space. Varèse, working in an utterly different technique, was, from the age of twenty, conscious of music as spatial. He worked with sound-masses, densities of sound, foreseeing the day when electronic instruments would permit him to project sounds into space where they would revolve, cross, collide, and interpenetrate like beams of light. Meanwhile Bartók and Stravinsky were "tearing time to tatters" far more radically than the ragtime originally described by that phrase. Their variable meters and asymmetrical rhythms shattered the expectation of ordered progression through time as surely as Schönberg broke down the system of expectation in harmonic progression.

By midcentury the transition from a music flowing in time to a music of sounds juxtaposed in space was complete. "One must leave time if one wants to let this music enter," Stockhausen said in the program notes for his *Carré*. György Ligeti declares that the flow of time has been deactivated. There is almost no movement, no line, only a shimmering cloud of sound in his *Atmosphères* and *Lux aeterna*. In George Crumb's *Night Music I*, sounds appear and disappear, reappear in a new place. A single sound is left to expand in air much as a stone dropped in a quiet pool spreads rippling circles.

Where musical time is conceived as simply durational, not periodic, its measurements may be mathematically precise or highly flexible. Bar lines have almost disappeared from scores; where they remain they are a visual convenience only, not signs of an even division of time. Durational values add up to varied sums; rarely is the old division and multiplication of beats applicable. The order of values may be determined on any serial basis, even one as arbitrary as a Fibonacci series where each number is the sum of the two preceding numbers. On the other hand, there are scores that resort to graphic symbols as the only way to indicate the desired flexibility. With either method the result is a placing of sounds in space, whether at measured or unmeasured distances, rather than an ordering of sounds in forward-moving time.

In many compositions, musical sections have no fixed order; they are interchangeable at the performer's choice. In Stockhausen's *Zyklus* the solo percussionist may start on any one of sixteen pages and proceed either clockwise or counterclockwise through the cycle. There is no logical beginning and no ordained end. Boulez in his Third Sonata offers a network of possibilities through which the pianist may choose his route.

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To Lukas Foss, composing has become the problem of working things out "so that the resulting music is what I want it to be regardless of *what* emerges *when,* or *what* vanishes *when.*"

Obviously there is evidence here of the prevalent interest in chance as well as of a new concept of time. Choice is left open, Boulez says, "in the constantly hoped for happiness of an irrational dimension." But more significant than the allowance for chance is the rejection of a fixed temporal sequence, the same rejection found in the novels of James Joyce and Virginia Woolf, in Faulkner's *Sound and the Fury,* in Hermann Broch's *Death of Virgil.* In both arts, the orderly development from past to future has given way to the free association of events common to the unconscious and to dreams.

As music has reflected new perceptions of time, a new interest in the music of the East has developed. "The orbit of Western music," Curt Sachs wrote in *The Rise of Music in the Ancient World,* "has passed the point furthest from Oriental music and in its cyclic course is again approaching regions we thought we had left for good." The music of India and the Near East had retained through the centuries the flexibility of rhythm that Western music sacrificed when it moved in the direction of harmony. Time units of the Near East and India are additive; they cannot be divided into equal parts. A rhythmic pattern is always asymmetrical. Eight beats may be grouped as $3 + 3 + 2$ or as $3 + 5$, never as $4 + 4$. The patterns, some as long as $5 + 5 + 2 + 2$ or even longer, are repeated without interruption but, in their inner irregularity, cannot suggest the steady march in time of our traditional music. "This smooth, fluctuating rhythm," Sachs wrote, "is to our even time as the flight of a soaring bird is to the gait of a horse."

In the Far East, regular divisions of time in units of two and four predominate, but with little rhythmic drive. Tempos are moderate to slow in China, more animated and varied in Indonesia. But throughout the Far East, interest centers not in motion or in the curve of melody but in the timbre and pitch of individual tones. Each sound is an expression in itself, a living vibration that fills time but suppresses motion. The voice of time is never insistent.

Composers of the West relate with ease not only to the static tone-entities of the Far East and the ancient fluctuating rhythms of the Near East, but to what Sachs calls the "cosmological connotations" of Oriental music in general. The purpose of music in the Orient has always been to convey eternal truths, to draw men into harmony with nature. Self-expression was never its aim. "Oriental art . . . never says 'I,' " Jacques Maritain wrote in *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry.* "It endeavors to hide the human self and to stare only at Things . . . . Things and the pure

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objectivity of Things, not man and human subjectivity, hold sway over Oriental art." In the West today, it is the pure objectivity of space that holds the artist's imagination in thrall. Time-consciousness gives way slowly to the space-consciousness long characteristic of the East.

To absorb this century's new perceptions of time and space into our conscious minds, we need the new images that only the creative artist can find. Scientists and philosophers often say (and painters as often deny) that the abstractions of twentieth-century science have passed beyond our powers of visualization. Leo Steinberg, in *Other Criteria,* replies that the philosophers of science are reckoning without the artists "since our visualizing powers are determined for us not by [the philosophers] but by the men who paint. And this our visual imagination, thanks to those in whom it is creative, is also in perpetual growth, as unpredictable as the extension of thought." The aural imagination is equally creative. Composers, probing the limitless abyss of time with sound, get back the echo of space. Their sounds fulfill themselves in space, reverberate in its depths, flash out of its black silence. The music explores a space where the imagination moves in freedom. Its silences are as significant as its sounds. We listen *across* the silences, *into* the sounds.

For three centuries, the best of Western music was superbly humanistic. Composers shaped musical phrases to man's breathing and timed them to his pulse. They tried to match in music the rhetoric of words. Their harmonies followed the rationality of cause and effect, and their forms developed in sequential time. They built magnificent structures of sound around man and his concept of flowing time. This was the music of the knowable world. But "the Universe," Francis Bacon told us centuries ago, "is not to be narrowed down to the limits of the Understanding, which has been men's practise up to now . . . the Understanding must be stretched and enlarged to take in the image of the Universe as it is discovered." Now music is being "stretched" again, as it had to be in the seventeenth century, to create new images for our understanding. Music is always there, Webern said. "We do not create it, we discover it." What we are discovering is a music conditioned less by our own rhythms of pulse and movement, more by the spaces, the silences, and the limitless time of the universe in which we live.

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PORTRAIT

John Reith: A Man for One Season

WILLIAM HALEY

A year has passed since the publication of *The Reith Diaries* stimulated the final outbursts of dislike, derision, puzzlement, and praise for that remarkable man. It was perhaps natural, in view of the contents of the book, but nonetheless significant, that the reviews concentrated far more on the Reithian character than on the Reithian achievements. This was the same at the height of his successes. Of those achievements, the creation of the British Broadcasting Corporation stands above all others. If much of what Reith did there has not endured unscathed, D day saw the culmination of another great task, and one in which his success was complete.

Last year's outbursts can be regarded as final because—although Professor Charles Stuart published only a fraction of the millions of words of exasperation, spleen, hatred, frustration, self-examination, and sheer unhappiness that John Reith had nightly set down in the course of sixty turbulent and meteoric years—it is unthinkable that anyone will ever want to read or publish the rest. Yet *The Reith Diaries* will remain one of the most outstanding revelations of one of the most outstanding men who played a leading part on the British scene in this century.

Few men have made a wider impact on the country in which they lived, and on some nations outside, than John Reith did. And if that impact is seen by a new generation to have been not only ephemeral but also meriting condemnation and scorn, there is no certainty that the values it represented will never be restored. The long swing of history shows morals and manners to oscillate as much as politics. Puritan, Restoration, Victorian—the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries went from what seemed one extreme to the other and back again. And if the nothing-barred license of the years since the *Lady Chatterley's Lover* verdict is thought to be the new norm for civilized society, there is no knowing how far the pendulum might someday, in a time of political or social upheaval, swing in reverse.

Would there then be a revaluation of Lord Reith? Would the present remnant of his admirers—of whom I am one—then prove to have been justified? The personal tragedy is that all the obstacles against this happening were erected by the man himself. He was commonly regarded as dour, domineering, ultra-prudish, and inflexible. This had early tarnished his public image. Those who knew him fought to present the true man. But *Into the Wind* (1949), his recital of his first sixty years; *Wearing Spurs* (1966), his memoirs (long delayed by the persuasion of his friends) of his part in the 1914–18 war; and his *Diaries* (1975)—he died in 1971—were increasingly unproductive of any admiration or liking by non-acquaintances. "No man who has left an autobiography has ever succeeded in making himself out a hero in the world's opinion, however strenuously he may have been bent on so doing," wrote Tom Taylor in 1853, when editing the *Journals* of the equally dismaying and even more unfortunate Benjamin Robert Haydon. The parallels are striking. Each man had an inordinate belief in his powers. Each longed to undertake more and

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more grandiose projects. Each alienated ardent well-wishers. The fundamental ideas of each were right and estimable. Each lived to see them vitiated, if not totally destroyed. Haydon felt the mortification of watching the crowds flocking to gawk at Tom Thumb while his exhibition of paintings in the same building was neglected. Before the war, Reith lost audience to the pop music of Radio Luxemburg; after it he lived to see all he had striven to make permanent in the BBC threatened by commercial television. The parallels are not, of course, complete: they never are. Tom Thumb was the final blow for Haydon. He ended his misery by cutting his throat. Reith lived on to the verge of eighty-two, embittered, frustrated, feeling himself unfulfilled, yearning for new tasks, being unhappy and causing unhappiness in those he was given. Also, *The Autobiography and Journals of Benjamin Robert Haydon* is a masterpiece. *The Reith Diaries* are not.

Why, then, concern ourselves with John Charles Walsham Reith, the Scottish minister's son who became a Knight of the Thistle, a Peer of the Realm, a Privy Counsellor, a Knight Grand Cross of the Royal Victorian Order (an honor in being the gift solely of the sovereign), a Knight Grand Cross of the British Empire, a member of the Queen's Body Guard for Scotland, twice Lord High Commissioner of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, an honorary Doctor of Civil Law of Oxford University, an honorary Doctor of Laws of Aberdeen University, Lord Rector of Glasgow University, and other distinctions? I remember Ralph McGill, then editor of the Atlanta *Constitution*, telling me about Cassius Marcellus Clay. To justify his enthusiasm he sent me William H. Townsend's *The Lion of White Hall*. Granting that Clay had been an antislavery leader, I wondered how such a violent and lethal master of the bowie knife—he killed his last man with it when he was about ninety—could appeal to so civilized a man as McGill. Then it came to me that in matters of character the most enduring distinction is exaggeration. It is the ultra-good and the irredeemably bad whom we remember. For one's fame to outlive life, it is necessary that one should have been larger than life. Englishmen and women do not go on talking about Lord Reith because of his successes, but because of his excesses. He was outsize in every way.

He must be briefly placed in his setting. His father was the Reverend George Reith of Glasgow, a Presbyterian and a saintly man, probably the only human being John Reith ever unreservedly respected. Young John started work as an engineering apprentice, went to France in 1914 as a Territorial cavalryman, was wounded by a German sniper in 1915, was sent to the United States (for which he kept a lifelong affection) in charge of munitions contracts for Great Britain. After the war he became manager of Beardmore's, the Glasgow engineering firm. In 1922 he obtained the post of first general manager of the then-forming British Broadcasting Company; did as much as anyone to turn it into the British Broadcasting Corporation monopoly in 1927; ruled it autocratically and idiosyncratically until he became bored and resigned in 1938—the only disastrous mistake he ever admitted to have made, and the one that cankered the rest of his busy and tempestuous life. In 1938 he took charge of British Imperial Airways, but the war came before he had time to do anything with it. (It must be admitted that he showed little sense of urgency, either because he could not recover—he never did—from the agoraphobia of no longer being within the walls of Broadcasting House, or because he decided that the onrush of approaching war would make any major effort a waste of time.) In January 1940 the prime minister, Neville Chamberlain, made him minister of information. Churchill came to power in May and sensibly transferred him to be minister of transport. In October he was downgraded to minister of works, and put in the House of Lords. In February 1942 Churchill sacked him. He never held office again. In June 1942 he joined the Admiralty and was responsible for the organization of D-day supplies. After the war he played a leading part in reorganizing Commonwealth communications. He was chairman of the Commonwealth Telecommunications Board from 1946 to 1950. From 1950 to 1959 he was chairman of the Colonial Development Corporation, and by being "bloody, bold, and resolute" turned ruinous chaos into profitable order. He became a company director. He did various

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other things, including getting new towns going and being head of Britain's National Film Finance Corporation.

All were trivial when measured against his powers. All left him unsatisfied. The older he became, the more passionately he hungered for one more great constructive task like the creation of the BBC. When anything approaching such a post became vacant, he sat by his telephone, awaiting a call. It never came. Honors accumulated: he never deemed them sufficient. The posts he did hold led to unpleasantness and rancor. His hatreds multiplied, but none of them ever displaced the primacy of his hatred for Churchill.

That the greatest Englishman of his time, and one of the greatest of all time, should have been the object of Reith's unceasing venom was a measure of his ambition. Much uncharitable fun has been made of his pretensions—as his assertion that, denied anything better, he would have been content to be viceroy of India or British ambassador in Washington. In nothing was he more sincerely himself. The middle-aged man who was convinced that the material and moral salvation of Britain in war and in peace would have been more assured had he been prime minister was only an extension of the young officer in Flanders, more than thirty years earlier, who was sure he could have run a division as well as any general, or the whole war for that matter. Churchill not only continued in the office Reith was certain he himself could have discharged more effectively; Churchill had also, in his view, deliberately under-used him, and had finally made him suffer the ignominy of dismissal. Reith never forgave him. (Later there was an exchange of letters, with all the magnanimity on Churchill's side.) Reith never forgave anybody for any slight. His memory was all-embracing and detailed. It was not tempered by any ability mellowly to forget. He was incapable of recollection in tranquillity.

How far were Reith's ambitions unjustly thwarted? Some years after he had left the BBC, and after he had ceased to be a member of the government, Reith looked back on his BBC days "when I was 'the most powerful man in the country next to the PM' and such like." That was his first illusion. Triumphant as his creation of the BBC was, it was secure and valid only so long as it conferred on him no national power. It would have been intolerable for the head of Britain's system of monopoly broadcasting, established as independent, to have had any personal public power. Not only would the politicians never have tolerated it, the nation as a whole would never have tolerated it. The essence of Britain's centuries-old political evolution is a constant denial of power outside historically developed and defined responsibilities, culminating in an elected House of Commons, and therefore ultimately based on public opinion.

In fairness to Reith it must be said that apart from religion, morals, and manners, which politicians are nowadays careful to eschew, he was not psychologically equipped for power. His enemies' image of him as a would-be dictator, even on much less than a national scale, is a travesty. Instinctively he was a man under authority. He liked to do what he was told by superiors he respected. His years at the Admiralty, when he delighted in addressing admirals as "Sir," are a relieving flash of comparative happiness in the strained gloom of his post-BBC public life. Men and women in public affairs can be divided into two classes: those who think that because a man is president or prime minister one should seek to do what he asks, and those who think that just because a man has so powerful and privileged an office every demand of his should be questioned and resisted until it is seen to be justified. John Reith was of the former class. He respected great office, hence his longing for it.

An even greater illusion of Reith's was that he could ever have been a successful politician. For this "endless adventure in the art of managing men" Reith was neither psychologically equipped nor mentally qualified. The slightest setback sent him into suppressed passion (until he could let it loose in his diary at night). The expression of opposition by a friend or colleague to a course he was embarked upon could turn that man into a "cad." Years of patient handling of his sensitiveness would be ignored. Fortunate was the offender if reconciliation followed. Politics is the opposite of all this; it is forbearing (however spuriously), compromising, fluid, supple. Nothing is more fascinating than the

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way in which a British cabinet can act as a band of political brothers until, perhaps once in its lifetime, the knives come out. For forty-eight hours, erstwhile colleagues are ready to stab each other in the back, or anywhere else they can. Suddenly the victors emerge. The casualties are removed. A general political amnesia brings what is left of the band of brothers together again, plus perhaps some new recruits. Reith's rigid code would have made such behavior impossible for him.

That he was a great organizer there is no doubt. His well-nigh perfect planning of D-day supplies showed him at his best. It gained him the honor that at times he treasured most: commander of the Bath, military division. It was the kind of operation for which he was best equipped—a creative once-for-all job with no repetitive responsibility after it was done. One of the things that led him to his fatal boredom with the BBC, after sixteen years of breathing life into a vision and giving it a Rolls-Royce type of administrative machine, was that he did not know what further he could do with it. If he had held on for another fifteen months, he would have had the vast challenge of the BBC's expansion and diversification to meet wartime needs. In the organizational side of this he would have excelled. Whether he would have withstood the government when it was essential to do so, and have undertaken a steady liberalization and cultural enlargement of the BBC's programs, is doubtful. In any case, like Churchill, he would have had to be got rid of after the war's end. A new generation that had no sympathy with his ideas was on the threshold.

It would have been time, too, for him to move on for his own good. His cast of mind was such that repetitive administration clouded his judgment. He was justified in maintaining that in issues for which he had been most bitterly attacked he had often been fundamentally right. But most rules and innovations are acceptable only so long as they are kept within the limits of common sense. Using the clock face as an analogy, they are good if taken up to twelve o'clock. Drive them beyond that point of stability and they fall into increasing foolishness. Time and again, when it was necessary to go back in the files to discover why Reith as director-general of the BBC had issued some ukase that had later been ridiculed by public opinion, one found that his original purpose had been good. Inexorably logical enforcement over a period of time had made it silly. The most difficult lesson for legislators and administrators to learn is to know when to stop.

For a friend and admirer of Lord Reith to act as devil's advocate may seem ungracious. But if his greatness is to be well founded in posterity's opinion, it is necessary to sort, as honestly as possible, the genuine from the spurious in his life's harvest of criticism. And the testimony of one who succeeded to Reith's most historic responsibility, who had the necessity to examine and reexamine the philosophy of his creation and to test the validity of his conduct of it, who knew him well enough to be able to discuss and argue candidly with him for more than twenty years without quarrel, may help the process.

The ever-increasing pace and power of science and invention—jet propulsion, nuclear energy, satellites, moon travel, lasers, computers—has made broadcasting so elementary and old-fashioned as to seem long established. Yet when young Mr. Reith first entered his office in December 1922, he was probably the only man who at once conceived the potentialities of the infant of which he was taking charge. Certainly no one else had any idea of what he could and would develop it to be. Dr. Garbett, when archbishop of York, told me that almost the first outside body John Reith had set up was a Religious Broadcasting Advisory Committee, that its clerical members often would not take the trouble to attend its meetings, and that Reith would call on them the next day to remonstrate with them on their lack of vision. It is hard to remember also that—so uncertain was it whether this novelty of broadcasting would grow and last—men and women in established posts were reluctant to give them up to join him. Reith recruited young graduates from Oxford and Cambridge. He became a Svengali to them, infusing and enthusing them with his ideas, teaching them administration, ordering their program ethics. At that stage he could have made broadcasting anything he wanted it to be. He set it in his mold before there was any general realization

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of the force he had in his hands. No doubt, if his creation had been manifestly antisocial, or otherwise against the public good, Parliament would have remolded it later. The remarkable fact is that what he conceived and nourished, without any precedents to guide him, was so admirable. The BBC suffered no substantial change until it had served the nation, the allied cause as a whole, and the world at large in the greatest of all wars. That this was, moreover, the achievement of a man who was not widely read or deeply cultured, who had no personal aesthetic to match his moral purpose, makes the achievement all the more prodigious.

His ethics were not merely Victorian; they were also of the manse. He imposed them ruthlessly throughout his rule at the BBC. He lived to see them denied and derided in an increasingly amoral age. That he was a deeply religious man is no longer the merit it once was. His belief in God was unassailable, although there were times when he wondered whether God was not letting him down. What can be accepted by all creeds, and by those without any, is that he sought to give dignity to life. He had an inherent sense of occasion and the British love of ceremony. He used broadcasting to foster both. He saw it as a means of unifying the nation, and he spread his fundamental concepts of broadcasting to some other countries. To him it was a high calling. He persuaded Robert Bridges, the poet laureate, to mention it, somewhat reconditely, in *The Testament of Beauty*.

His steadily growing determination in 1938 to leave the BBC was not due to any weakening of these beliefs. It arose from his insatiable desire to be "stretched." He was only forty-nine. His creation was working well. He wanted a new test for his powers. That nothing comparable was ever put in his way was his misfortune. Something might have been if war had not sucked him into the jealous world of politics. He failed in none of the posts he was given after the war. But by his standards they were all minor. Some involved quarreling with, yet perforce obeying, ministers he did not respect. He had long had the reputation of being a difficult man to work with. (In fact most of his professional colleagues in whatever he did held him in affectionate memory. His disinterested kindness could be overwhelming.) Among politicians and others there grew a consensus that he should not be given a position of real influence. One of the things that had alienated support for him when he was in Churchill's government was his constant desire to do other men's work as well as his own. This was not because he wanted to poach. It was the expression of his conviction that his capacity was not being tested to its limits. He was content only when his dynamo was at full load. He never believed that it was. Tragically for him, that belief, throughout the second half of his working life, was correct.

I have said John Reith was a great man. In the face of all this, can such a judgment hold? Greatness is entirely a subjective valuation. It is incapable of exact definition; it cannot be quantified. Success does not provide its measure. The whole of a man's character is not required to make it. There have been reprehensible sides to many great men. There are many kinds of greatness. One kind depends on the purity of a vision, the capacity to realize it, and its benefit to people as a whole. Reith's creation of the BBC met all these requirements. He was proud; he could be petty; he had mental arrogance. His admirers can admit this, and stay convinced that had he been given the opportunity he would have risen to a new challenge. The vehemence of some of his enemies and their determination to deny him any dominant role, however nonpolitical, sprang from a conviction of his ability. His exclusion was a painful backhanded tribute. His own belief in himself and his inordinate ambitions do not diminish his stature. "No man ever rises to greatness in this world," wrote Froude, "who does not aim at objects beyond his powers." Maybe some realization of this is stirring.

Occasionally Reith is discussed in terms of what might have been. What he stood for is general knowledge. In Britain and some other countries, "Reithian" is an understood adjective, whether what it represents is admired or spurned. Apocryphal stories about him are mixed with the true. The gaunt, ultra-tall, commanding figure, with the huge crescent bullet wound scarring his face, is beginning its long walk into legend.

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The Snows Have Melted

(Horace; Liber IV, Carmen 7)

FREDERICK MORGAN

Diffugere nives. . .

The snows have melted, the grass renews the fields,
the trees are green again;
change succeeds change on earth, and now more calmly
the streams flow past their banks.

Naked, the Nymphs and Graces dance their rounds
but the year, the hurried hour
snatching from us each lovely day, give warning: do not hope
for immortality.

The cold eases to the western winds, spring gives way
to summer, which in turn must die
when fruit-bearing autumn has achieved the harvest—then
motionless winter returns.

The moon swift-changing in the sky regains her losses
but we, when we have fallen
where good Aeneas is, and Ancus and rich Tullus,
are only dust and shadow.

Who knows whether the gods will add a tomorrow
to what we have today?
Everything you give your own dear self will be saved
from grasping hands of your heir.

Once you are dead and over you Minos has uttered
his notable verdict,
then, Torquatus, not family, nor eloquence, nor goodness
itself shall bring you back:

Diana may not release her chaste Hippolytus
from darkness down below,
nor has Theseus strength to burst the chains that bind
his dear and loyal friend.

FREDERICK MORGAN's collection of poems, *A Book of Change*, was nominated for a National Book Award in 1973. *Poems of Two Worlds*, his second collection, is scheduled to be published in early 1977.

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The Lost Worlds of Reinhold Niebuhr

MARTIN E. MARTY

Although Reinhold Niebuhr died only five years ago, his reputation has already passed through several stages. After their deaths, important people usually pass through the "middle distance" of memory. They are "too far for gratitude, too near for reverence . . . behind a passing cloud." So wrote Hugh Ross Mackintosh, who had to wait more than forty-five years to locate Alfred Lord Tennyson and Albrecht Ritschl, who were still behind such a cloud. But with the faster pace of a newer day, Niebuhr has begun to emerge from behind his in one-tenth that time.

Between other figures of Niebuhr's time and our own there certainly has been a cloud. Paul Tillich? He wrote the most magnificent systematic theology published in America in two centuries. But he was at once dismissed by people of opposing schools of thought, or by people who did not like the bedroom habits of which his wife wrote. Martin Luther King, Jr.? The radicals in his train dismissed his dream of racial integration as having been beside the point. His enduring enemies, thanks to the FBI, also held his rumored bedroom habits against him. Albert Schweitzer? His philosophy, we were told, looked foolish in retrospect, and his hospital failed. Pope John's *aggiornamento* led to Catholic decline, not to a second spring. Father John Courtney Murray, an American counterpart to Niebuhr in matters civil? Since he could be made out to be an old-fashioned Thomist and younger Catholics were repudiating Thomism, his memory was similarly clouded.

Now that the obituaries are over, sullen and sulking critics who had waited for their chance have come in from the wings to attack the figures they had formerly feared. Others, feeling cheated because a world in which they believed has changed so rapidly, have to fault the leaders who styled that obsolete world for them. Still others do make positive contributions by cutting cult figures down to size and by helping to put a true perspective on overblown reputations.

Niebuhr is back. One hears this in the field of international relations. If only "Reinie" were around, he would help the United States recover a mission in international affairs and would provide criteria for judging it. Are liberals devoid of ideas and power in domestic politics? Niebuhr and his colleagues, it is argued, would have been able to provide fresh impetus. Maybe the old Union Theological Seminary warrior could do so posthumously through his books. Mainline theologians, Protestant and Catholic, lacking voices that could be heard in the sphere of what Benjamin Franklin in 1749 called "a *publick Religion,*" resurrect Niebuhr to speak for them and to help them carve out a space. Even the "new conservatives" in intellectual circles appeal to his realist sense to establish themselves as articulators of "the public philosophy."

The task of all these groups has been made fairly simple—in part because of the enduring elements in Niebuhr, a man of his time who lived in but was not exhausted by the *Zeitgeist*; and in part because of the superficiality of many of those who had come to bury him or to keep him behind that cloud. Those who rejected him as—perish the

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thought!—irrelevant only served to hasten the day when they would be seen as irrelevant themselves. As Ernest Gellner has said of any movement's breathless revisionists, "the modernism of one generation is doubly dated in the next."

One extended quotation from a writer who appreciates Niebuhr can summarize the whole case, for it is rich in pith and vim and shoots its critical arrows with such relish at those who treated Niebuhr lightly or with disdain. In a book significantly titled *The Legacy of Reinhold Niebuhr* (1975) Nathan A. Scott, Jr., writes:

> The frivolous experimentalism of American theology in the 1960s made it appear to be by no means unaffected, like so much else in cultural life, by the general Slump of the period. In one moment it was to be found sponsoring theologies "of the death of God," and in another moment theologies "of play," "of festivity," "of fantasy," and "of the psychedelic experience." It had joined the Dionysiac pack: its shamanistic tacticians were intending to be "swingers," and their impatience with anybody who questioned their "scenarios" for Paradise Now made them so heedless of the legacy of one like Reinhold Niebuhr that, for a time, he appeared to have been suddenly relegated to the discard. So it was also in the world of radical politics: there, too, a great passion for simplistic affirmation reigned, and, amidst the angers engendered by the Vietnam war and the strident new ethnicism, it began to be taken for granted—by the pundits, say, of *The New York Review* and the votaries of that brief enterprise called the New Left—that what the urgencies of the hour required above all else was a confidence in the rightness of one's own cause uncomplicated by any dubieties regarding its unilateralism or liability to distortion.

Niebuhr had one advantage, so far as reputation was concerned. Rehabilitation could come early because illness had progressively removed him from the scene long before his death in 1971. He suffered the first of a series of debilitating strokes in 1952. While he completed eleven more books—a lifework for anyone else—he was weak enough to be attacked all through the sixties. By the beginning of the seventies, then, Gabriel Fackre could already begin to look ahead with *The Promise of Reinhold Niebuhr*. He has since been followed by Ronald Stone and Paul Merkley with forward-looking themes: *Reinhold Niebuhr: Prophet to Politicians* and *Reinhold Niebuhr: A Political Account*. A Niebuhr industry thrives in graduate schools of theology, where attention is directed both to Reinhold and his brother and peer, H. Richard Niebuhr. It is the critics who seem to be passing behind a cloud into permanent obscurity.

Temptations for neo-Niebuhrians to savor easy triumphs are strong. There had been no danger that readers of Mackintosh could personally recall the prime years of a Tennyson or a Ritschl. But many Niebuhrians, the advisers to the authors of dissertations and the writers of those books, can recall Niebuhr's role in shaping the world that they now experience in middle age. Only by strenuous acts of imagination will they be able to conceive how unavailable Niebuhr's context has become for a new generation and how much violence will be done to his work if that context is forgotten.

In a graduate seminar two years ago I lapsed: "As all of you will recall, during the Truman years Niebuhr . . ." A student interrupted: "Professor, do you know that you are the only person in this room who was even *born* in the Truman administration?" In mixed audiences you may hear a lecturer ask people to recall precisely what they had been doing when Pearl Harbor was reported, only to find that almost none had reached the age of reason by December 7, 1941—a time when Niebuhr had two decades of productivity behind him.

Nostalgia, "the rust of memory," permits people to pick and choose elements of the past without paying attention to their environments. Thus, commercialized nostalgia would give us the thirties without the depression, the forties and fifties without war and cold war. Historical reckoning is a more complex matter. Niebuhr, proudly confessing that he was among other things a journalist who tried to discern the signs of the times, does not make full sense apart from his setting in the milieus of depression and wars and cold wars—moments that are hard to re-create for the imagination of people who would ransack his thought in order to show that it is *he* who turns out to be relevant.

While only a masochist or someone preparing to write a definitive biography would even aspire to read the thousands of articles

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written by Niebuhr, it is possible to reread all his books, a task that I enjoyed while writing a chapter for Scott's *Legacy*. What impressed me was the length of the historical leap that was already needed for me to land inside Niebuhr's worlds. Much of his career was devoted to the search for a true American proletariat. His Marxist stage was long and intense, but it had almost nothing to do with the romantic Marxism of counter-cultural radicals of the late sixties. When he spoke of Labor he referred to the then underorganized unions that were fighting for survival and respectability. But now I would look at the newspaper to read of Teamster acts against Cesar Chavez, or look down the road at Big Labor as the Establishment, or look out of my tent flap at the fifteen-thousand-dollar camping rig and recreational vehicle of the laboring heir of those who benefited from Niebuhr's efforts.

Similarly, Niebuhr's wartime and postwar writings will be distorted unless they are seen as part of the package deal that the past provides us. As he moved from pacifism to ungrudging support of the American entry into the Second World War, he attacked the culturally lagging leftover pacifists who had been his comrades in the thirties. But in many cases those attacks now seem poor apologias for militancy, in part because he saw Nazism as the ultimate threat to civilized values. His critics have reason and right to say that he made some bad guesses in the cold war; these even helped produce the world of Vietnam's "best and brightest." His own later vehement dissent against that war should not obscure the fact that his views of foreign policy had kept him from speaking out against the early commitments that led to it. Citing as proof little passages out of the Niebuhrian contexts does violence to his own agonies, and does injustice to one who had, as his biographer June Bingham put it in her title, the *Courage to Change*.

So you can't go home again. We have known that all along, in principle, but specific cases still give us difficulty. To say that we are dealing with lost worlds even when reckoning with instantly rehabilitated historical figures sounds banal, given the fact that all pasts are irretrievable. But the principle was easier to remember when Daniel J. Boorstin described *The Lost World of Thomas Jefferson* about 125 years after Jefferson's death, for example, than it is with Niebuhr a scant five years after his.

The analogies in the case of Niebuhr should not be overplayed. Niebuhr's generation had already made the transit described by Boorstin in the Jeffersonian instance. The theologian's world was a complex urban and industrial one. But it cannot be transported whole; acts of translation are necessary. This theme can be illustrated best in three areas. The first two of these are domestic and international politics. The third, our choice, is the world of religion in which Niebuhr lived, moved, had his being and his audience. The selection of Niebuhr's religious context may seem perverse or parochial and, in the secular academic or intellectual context, more or less beside the point.

Niebuhr had never been an ecclesiastical provincial, confined in a churchly world tinged with stained glass and incense. One did not have to be appreciative of his religious faith or power base in order to come under his influence. Nathan Scott's list of those influenced includes a diverse group. F. O. Matthiessen, George Kennan, Hans Morgenthau, Robert Coles, and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., merely head a cast that could run into thousands. Most of them would have felt mildly uneasy in Niebuhr's classrooms, more nervous in the campus chapels such as the one at Union Theological Seminary where he often preached in New York, and positively embarrassed in the little Detroit industrial parish where he spent the first eleven years of his career. It would truly do violence to Niebuhr to locate him only in the churchly setting.

He was on the letterhead of scores of organizations on the Left in the thirties and on the Moderate Left in the fifties. A few of these had a quasi-religious ethos, some a definite religious point of view; one thinks of the Fellowship of Reconciliation. There was an explicit theological base in the journals with which he was associated: *Christian Century, Radical Religion, Christianity and Crisis*. But he also wrote for the *Nation*, which was not exactly a diocesan paper. The people who made up the Socialist party, the Liberal party, the Democratic party, Americans for Democratic Action, the League for Independent Political

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Action, the Committee for Cultural Freedom, and the Resettlement Campaign for Exiled Professionals for the most part would have headed for the nearest exit rather than face any kind of creedal test. Hans Morgenthau was the most eloquent among those who could take Niebuhr without his religion, and not a few of us heard him say that "Reinie and I come out about the same on politics, but I do not need all his metaphysics to get where we both get."

Niebuhr did. Pragmatic and practically political he may have been, but his metaphysics and his institutional ties helped shape his lost worlds. I say "worlds" because both his *Umwelt,* the surrounding world of his perceptions, and his *Innenwelt,* the interior life that does the perceiving, have to be partially reconstructed if one is to retrieve his thought. "I am I and my circumstances." "Tell me your landscape and I will tell you who you are." José Ortega y Gasset may have overstated his philosophical point of view, and in exaggerated form it could lead to a resort to solipsism. But it serves to alert us to the tasks before those who would imaginatively reenact the life-worlds of Niebuhr even this soon after his death.

Niebuhr's inherited and chosen circumstances were those of a religious world wherein the parochial, denominational, ecumenical, interfaith, and secular spheres intersected. Son of a German Reformed parson, he occupied a parsonage in a landscape shadowed by the small steeple of a humble church in Detroit. The taller towers of Union Seminary provided his enduring vocational setting. That environment, of course, was anything but sectarian. In his later years Niebuhr credited both Jews and Catholics with having made an impact on his developing thought. He pushed out the boundaries of religious restriction every day. But his was still a ground-to-sky religious life and landscape. And, in the version that he knew it, it is lost.

The old German congregation has been displaced in inner-city Detroit. It is difficult to picture a Protestant parson, even one linked with other clerics, having the influence on a metropolis that young Niebuhr did. No Henry Ford would tremble at or even notice such parish-based people. True, Niebuhr later saw Protestant power move upward into complex boards and bureaucracies, into seminaries and publications. He helped create some of them and moved up into them. But that world most of all has been lost. Oh, yes, in the fastnesses of what still passes for a Bible belt you can still hear rousers who make their living by commending to hellfire the National or World Councils of Churches for being domestically liberal, theologically heretical, and "soft on Communism." But the pro-Council people know that the old glory had departed, the power has been diminished, the driving forces of history have gone elsewhere.

Henry J. Pratt has appropriately subtitled his book *The Liberalization of American Protestantism* "A Case Study in Complex Organizations." In the Niebuhrian years, social-activist power in religion had trickled into such organizations. They were, as Pratt shows, wedded to American political liberal styles of the fifties and sixties. That style of liberalism has not only been discredited in the eyes of the old New Left, but is even a problem for the new Old Left that tries to surface and become plausible in presidential election years.

The parishes have retrieved some of their lost local power, but it can only be wielded rarely, quietly, and with at most local effect. The populist strand of reaction that makes bureaucracy the villain is strong in religion. Love of the immediate, fear of the remote—this spirit makes up the new ethos. Budgetary crunches have led to the cutting back of extraparochial religious forces, and the secular public has caught on to the limits of power among those who make ecclesiastical pronouncements on social questions. "Who's afraid of the archbishop?" might be the sneer of urban mayors who once worried about bloc votes. The bloc votes are gone in the world since Vatican II, the world of mass media and overwhelming pluralism.

A careful reading of the kind Merkley provides shows that Niebuhr could and did count on power in both parochial and the larger-organizational spheres of religion. Never a mere Marxist or a pure Marxist, he carried his criticism of social classes especially into religion, and looked with at least faint hope to church agencies and parishioners, expecting now and then a judging

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word of God to reach the creative minorities among them. The potential of such minorities remains, but their constellations are all different now.

While none of his contemporaries was as influential as he in American religion, Niebuhr did have widely recognized company. A counterpart among Roman Catholics was the Jesuit Father John Courtney Murray, and, a little later, Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel spoke out of Jewish resources to public issues. F. Thomas Trotter and Dean K. Thompson (*Christian Century,* April 23, 1975, and January 7–14, 1976) have prompted many to reflect that the leaders from 1920 to 1960, Niebuhr among them, "were members of what was perhaps the most outstanding single generation of leaders in the history of the American churches." The world they created is gone. Martin Luther King, Jr., proved that prophetic Protestantism could later produce a national figure, but he has had no successor. Now and then the media will pick up and drop a dissenter who appeals to conscience on religious grounds. None have sustained credibility. (The only exception I can think of is a cluster of thoughtful ethical thinkers like Paul Ramsey, Richard McCormick, and James M. Gustafson, who have had some impact in the field of medical ethics.)

Nowhere is the sense of Niebuhr's lost world more palpable than when one looks for what people in mass communications call "name recognition," or celebrity status. Not that in his prime Niebuhr was a household word on everyone's block. But he was widely known; with a Murray and a Heschel he achieved whatever recognition *Time* cover status symbolizes. The Protestant parsons in the era of neo-orthodoxy knew of him and could quote him, expecting some signs of recognition as they could not with any comparable figure today. The "influentials" knew him. No theologian occupies such status today.

The communicators tell us that Billy Graham is recognized in the media on a scale that only the pope can dwarf. But mention of Graham only reinforces the awareness of how lost Niebuhr's world is, for the two were and remain opposites. Asked to issue a mild demurrer or express a faint doubt during the Christmas bombings in Cambodia, Graham announced that he had decided he was not an Old Testament prophet but a New Testament evangelist. Niebuhr could not have chopped up his worlds or his understanding of God's message that way. Graham has had the ear of all the recent presidents but, from what he tells us, he has poured forth only honey.

Union Seminary has come upon hard times, along with the other influential schools of its kind. Recovering from the buffeting it took in those early post-Niebuhr years, it tries to regather a clientele while also trying to maintain expensive real estate. The Luce empire that turned to Niebuhr's Union and its counterparts for oracles now has to identify the unknowns it quotes with the adjective "distinguished."

While the proletarian or populist Niebuhr of the 1930s could speak in the abstract of the qualities of faith that appeared among the churches of the dispossessed, up close and in the concrete he had little to say for their religious preferences. The fundamentalists and pentecostalists, taking refuge in sectarian groups that accented otherworldliness, seemed to him to distract people from the social struggle. This meant that he regularly relied on mainline religion for a hearing.

The mainline groups are around, but they lack the intactness or potency that Niebuhr came to see in them, with their inflated strength after World War II. He himself was not by inheritance or in his manner what today's analysts and derogators call a WASP, a white Anglo-Saxon Protestant with faintly aristocratic pretensions. His roots came from the Continent, which counted for much less in American Protestantism. But his power base was in the WASP world, and its hegemony—no matter what apologists for the "new ethnicity" say—has largely gone, at least in religion.

Peter Schrag's journalistic treatment did not do justice to the details, but his title has the gist right: *The Decline of the Wasp.* The WASPs' religious and secular worlds have been diminished; the *P* has meant little in that acronym for a long time. But in literary circles there had been at least a post-Protestant reminiscence. It has been replaced by the almost proverbial worlds of "the alienated Jewish novelist" or the black writer and

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artist. Only about 30 percent of the people are WASP-NN, code for "white Anglo-Saxon Protestants, native born of similar stock." Since the sixties, at least, the juices have been with the Catholic ethnics, who have burst from their urban and spiritual ghettos in postwar prosperity and with thanks to Vatican II; or with the blacks, for whom Niebuhr cared and with whom he got on well, but few of whom were part of his world; or with American Indians or Latinos or "Third Worlders," or almost anyone but the bland descendants of the people to whom Niebuhr could appeal for conscientious reflection on his own terms.

We slid past that *P* in WASP too rapidly. What Schrag's book failed to accomplish for the churches, one by Dean Kelley did. He called it *Why Conservative Churches Are Growing*. He might as well have named it *Why Mainline Churches Are Relatively Declining*. The professionals who have criticized Kelley's methods and use of data rarely argue that no seismic shift was being recorded in his account. Niebuhr-style churches, ecumenically and moderately liberal and conceivably social activist, were losing place to churches associated with the Billy Grahams among the moderates, to the sects all the way to the far right. There, often walled off against the world, they have made capital off hungers for security or authority among citizens of the seventies. Niebuhr had been well poised to understand religious shifts of this order, for he was a prophet of a new pluralism. On legal grounds and in spirit he had to be ready to see a weakening of the old mainline Protestant world. He knew how to use the vestigial power of its institutions against themselves and against exploitation around them. He and his brother were public philosophers or, better, public theologians. More and more they addressed people in the whole political body.

The basic question haunts: What can be retrieved from Niebuhr's lost worlds? My intention has been anything but to write in an elegiac or even nostalgic spirit about the passing of the old powers and the arrival of the new. Instead, it is more important to point to the fact that the transition Niebuhr himself made into the newer pluralist setting is rich in paradigm and example for a new generation. He had a clientele but constantly had to fashion new ones. He worked to broaden his base without forgetting his regular following. He transcended Protestantism-Catholicism-Judaism in the public sector while remembering his traditional roots.

Niebuhr was not the first to essay such a project, though he was the most successful to attempt one in his day. Long before, Jonathan Edwards did more than stare at the bell rope and utter judgments while calling for revivals. He looked out at "whole nations" and spoke of the covenant as it applied to American colonies. In his train eventually were to come Walter Rauschenbusch and the social gospel leaders. From literary and political pulpits the Melvilles and the Lincolns have spoken in metaphysical terms about the Union.

Two hundred years after the birth of the nation, our civil order still needs the fabric of a public philosophy and, for those who see things in religious contexts, a public theology. Walter Lippmann and Hannah Arendt, who until recently articulated such philosophies through the decades, have been removed from the field. We do get occasional efforts at new enactments: in Richard Goodwin's doleful view of the American condition, in Robert Nisbet's mourning of lost authority, in Robert Heilbroner's projections of apocalypse, and in Robert N. Bellah's and Sidney E. Mead's search for a civil religion or the religion of the republic. The beginnings are there, but a directionless public shows few signs of hearing a sustained and deeply grounded argument coupled with the ad hoc comments that a Lippmann or a Niebuhr could apply so well.

The Niebuhr apologists make their best case, not when they try to show that his positions are relevant for a new day, or that his power base has not gone, but when they ask what was paradigmatic in his effort. It seems to many of them and to me that he was well attuned to an American environment precisely because he combined so well the empirical and pragmatic or activist senses with some deeper philosophical grounding. Those who know only the practical arts do not stir thought. Abstract thinkers' influence here is usually limited to academic specialists. It is hard to imagine that something wholly alien to the Niebuhrian blending spirit will be

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comprehensible in the immediate American future. We seem to be programmed for the combination he understood so well.

While his worlds are lost, Niebuhr's reputation and influence remain—in part by force of personal example. He was able to combine a secure sense of himself and of the flow of his life. In his case there was a vital fusion between the two. Grounded in a specific philosophical and, in his instance, biblical outlook, he was free to move into and out of pacifism, through and beyond Marxism, without looking like a faddist or a follower of trends. America changes too much to permit someone to appear unchanging throughout his career, but these changes inspire lesser figures to gain currency by serving as weather vanes. Not Niebuhr.

As Merkley argues at book length and as I have suggested here, no one can do justice to Niebuhr without comprehending him as a whole. Thus "atheists for Niebuhr," as they called themselves, saw him as a biblical and Christian theologian. They never forgot. Niebuhr never assumed that his Christian categories communicated much of anything directly. He especially regretted later, on pedagogical though not on substantive grounds, his own reassertion of Original Sin, "the only empirically verifiable Christian doctrine." But he could treat that category and his understanding of the biblical themes of freedom and destiny in an almost reflexive fashion. The forgotten point is that such accents did not limit his influence. He did not aspire to please all and win all by being an eclectic universal human being. The other true universalists of our time share his sense of tradition, provenance, and particularism in philosophy or religion. Martin Luther King, Jr., Martin Buber, Mohandas Gandhi, Albert Schweitzer, Dorothy Day, or Pope John—we intone their names and think of them as cosmopolitan. But they were grounded in specific black Baptist, Jewish, Hindu, liberal Protestant, and Roman Catholic traditions, which at their depth lead people to become comprehensible to those who do not share them.

A successor to Niebuhr at Union, Roger Shinn, goes so far as to say that "at the center of [Niebuhr's] theology was the cross of Christ, and he deeply resented any effort to interpret the cross pragmatically as a calculated device for achieving historical goals," however pragmatic he was. The symbols of Original Sin and the cross were never neutral signs; they had always been offensive and they offended and scandalized still. Niebuhr would have been the last to push away those who rejected the theological claims to which they pointed. But he moved into and through them to the realm of civil discourse and "*publick Religion.*" With Murray he might have argued that "as we discourse on public affairs, on the affairs of the commonwealth, and particularly on the problem of consensus, we inevitably have to move upward, as it were, into realms of some theoretical generality—into metaphysics, ethics, theology." There is where confusion begins, but effort is necessary because "among us there is a plurality of universes of discourse," of worlds that are constantly changing and becoming lost.

Often those who know about the incommensurability of worlds, as Niebuhr and Murray did, do best to break their confines and imagine their way into others. Two hundred years after the birth of this pluralistic nation, the need "to move upward" into civil discourse and public philosophy or theology remains urgent. Those who, even in his own day, could not share all the elements of Niebuhr's world are not likely to move into it now, no matter what the legatees of his legacy might say or try. But if they are aware of his particularities and traditions, it is more likely that in their not fully commensurable worlds they will meet him on levels appropriate to their new needs. The loss of Niebuhr's worlds need not necessarily entail the loss of his insight or his gift. Where there is depth, *cor ad cor loquitur:* heart speaketh unto heart.

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Art and Artifice
Some Ironies in the One Culture

WYLIE SYPHER

Lately there have been reappraisals of that abrasive writer Thomas Carlyle. Shall we begin, then, with Carlyle's premise that consciousness itself is a loss of innocence, or, as Oscar Wilde put it, "self-consciousness and the critical spirit are one"? In this sense any critical system is per se a loss of innocence—the innocence of a child or of a craftsman when he makes something without intending it to be "art." Any reasoned theory about how and why an artifact becomes art is a fall from what Aristotle called the "improvisations" from which drama arose. Even early Greek playwrights must have been conscious of how they wanted to use dramatic form. So literature has indeed been institutional, as it must be when improvisations become aesthetic methods; for, as Browning's Abt Vogler said, "It is all triumphant art, but art in obedience to laws." Such artistic consciousness is an inevitability.

But the special irony in the nineteenth century is that most of the arts intended a return to spontaneity, to "powerful feeling," to "nature," and yet no era has had a more heightened consciousness of its different methods of representing. As Carlyle remarked, "we have an artificial Poetry, and prize only the natural." "Literature," he added, "has become one boundless self-devouring Review."

It seems perverse to associate Sir Joshua Reynolds with Oscar Wilde; yet Wilde, in thinking that being natural is a very difficult pose to keep up, was really repeating what Reynolds said in 1786: that poetry and painting both speak a language "in the highest degree artificial," and that the mind employs this "artificial mode" as a "vehicle of sentiment."

Few ages have established more artificial modes than did the nineteenth century, many based upon critical theories. The period cherished innocence, but rejected innocence in its artistry. Carlyle spoke of the "felicity of having no system" and stated that "Sincerity is better than grace." Sincerity is only an aspect of the artist's wish to recover a lost innocence. Shades of the prison house closed upon this innocence as the century devised its astonishing varieties of artistic theories—ways to return to "the natural," a quest culminating in the schematic and induced innocence of the aesthetes. Nor was science itself exempt from this fabricated innocence, for the so-called scientific method was one more artificial mode of representing nature.

Thus the century temperamentally disclaimed artifice, yet relied upon artifice in its science, its arts, its industrial techniques. In fact, as Alfred North Whitehead noted, the great contribution of the nineteenth century was its invention of techniques.

In 1861, when Baudelaire heard *Tannhäuser*, he was ravished by its music—a romantic response, for if romanticism means anything, it is abandonment to emotion, a way of indulging, rather innocently, a spontaneous feeling. But for Baudelaire feeling was not enough, and he wrote a sentence that is an index to much of what happened in the arts of the day: "I resolved to explain to myself why, and to transform my pleasure

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[*volupté*] into knowledge [*connaissance*]." *Connaissance* is here an ambiguous word: understanding, consciousness, insight, recognition, clarification. Baudelaire could not rest in his innocence and needed to find exactly how his feelings could transpose themselves into a more intelligible formulation.

In his examination of his feeling, the critic was born, and Baudelaire often insisted that the poet must be a critic. He must be conscious of what he is doing, of how he experiences, and why. He needs an aesthetic, and except for Keats, or perhaps Blake, the romantics had no aesthetic because they were so engaged in the feeling itself. Coleridge had strongly metaphysical concerns, but the "Ode on a Grecian Urn" proves that Keats studied how his abandonment to the orgiastic spectacle of Eros (*volupté*) transformed itself into a recognition (*connaissance*) of an attitude expressing the cold and eternal. The ode is at once a surrender to *volupté* and an account of the process of writing a poem, or getting it written. As critic of his own *volupté*, Keats is one of the first modern poets to regard how the lived experience mutates into art form "with the magic hand of chance."

Keats was aware of the presence of the past. His verse arises from his attention to preceding art forms—the Elgin marbles, Chapman's translation, Spenserian and Miltonic modes: art forms generating art forms. Such consciousness of art forms begets an aesthetic. But it can also lead to the museum, to literary archaeology. As the century progressed, each of the arts—architecture, painting, poetry—while revolting against official academism, raised in acute ways the question of a proper use of the past. Often the artist tried to find a style by reverting, eclectically, to former styles. So the quest for a style (which is a loss of innocence) did not yield a period style but a pastiche of bygone styles.

The recycling of past styles ramified into sundry artistic methods, often inventive, often expressive, often highly personal. We have Tennyson's medievalism, the more decorative medievalism of the Pre-Raphaelites, William Butterfield's polychrome Gothic, and the pseudo-perpendicular of Pugin and the ecclesiologists. In other, more modern, modes came Constable's protocubist landscapes, Turner's Claude-like luminism, the impressionists' broken pigment, Degas's photographic angle, Browning's proto-imagism, Zola's quasi-scientific documentation, the silence of Mallarmé's language, the neopagan Wagnerian myth, the preciosity of Pater's style, the cleansed outline of Beardsley's Art Nouveau—all productive, many to an extent "natural," and most hardly innocent.

Behind many such modes was a premise that often falsified: the myth of Art as an absolute; that is, Fine Art over against applied art. An injurious result of striving for a valid method was the assumption that there is a domain of Art. Often method was a foyer to the Palace of Art, with its synthetic beauty, which Tennyson found alienating from life and sincerity. Keats, with his capacity for negative capability, was led back from art form to a heightened consciousness of life, "Thou shalt remain a friend to man," and if we do not feel these essences, we die. But the aesthetes, entering the Palace of Art, made art a surrogate for living. To paraphrase Pater: not experience, but the art *form* of experience, becomes the end. Pater seeks *volupté* but transforms it to language, substituting vocabulary for reengagement. No exit. Language can heighten consciousness of what we live, but what we live is not "comely" language. Ruskin, even while he preached his pseudomedieval aesthetic, dimly sensed that the applied arts were the only sound basis for architecture, sculpture, painting. However, it was left for William Morris to proclaim the democracy of the arts and to argue the primacy of weaving, pottery, carving, and glassblowing, which by prevailing standards were not arts but mere crafts.

The realm of fine art became the realm of culture, and culture meant putting on the masks of bygone arts. So Alma-Tadema painted his "Victorians in togas," and Etty's salacious female nudes became cultural images when they were set in a classic context. So, too, Tennyson's rather innocent hedonism phrased itself with classic magnitude in "Tithonus," "Ulysses," and "The Lotos-Eaters." The sociologist calls it cultural lag—the falsification of contemporary vision in an academism invoked by the very artists who rejected academism. David opened the century with the romantic classicism of his revolutionary painting. Flaxman, Canova, Thor-

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valdsen, early heralds of Art Nouveau, produced their icebox-white sculpture. Ruskin, revolting from industrial mechanism, fostered his Gothic myth, never seeing the medieval cathedral as an engineering fabric but as a symbol for a Northern spirit and the expressionist vitality of workers building in "fantastic ignorance." Meanwhile, although the Renaissance was held to be a reaction against the medieval, Browning, like Burckhardt, was inventing *his* myth of the Renaissance artist who was as individualistic as the Gothic artisan fancied by Ruskin.

Equally deceptive was the cultural myth of the Grand Style, a mode for the "big subject" of moral or devotional import as treated by Leonardo, Michelangelo, or Raphael. The absurdly synthetic academism of the Grand Style phrases itself in Ruskin's demand for "noble" themes requiring Love of Beauty, Sincerity, Invention, and adhering to Nature but selecting from Nature whatever is elevating. Ruskin rejected academism, but the Grand Style is an outrageous academism—art begot upon art with a vengeance.

Ironically most nineteenth-century experiments in art were a revolt against middle-class attitudes and industrial methods, against middle-class empiricism, pragmatism, positivism, techniques. Yet the artist, in his effort to return to nature and reality, was an empiricist devoted to his own method, his own technique. Delacroix, turning from his heroic themes, often reached the limits of his enormous talent in his still lifes. Ingres, that tyrant of classic form, is painfully literal in recording fabrics and decor in his portraits.

The Impressionists were, by intent, empiricists. Each painter, with his own *facture*, tried to render what he actually saw under changing light. The Pre-Raphaelites labored to be factually accurate in every hair, every leaf, every thread, every vein in a rock. Meanwhile the novelists were making their own studies of actuality in Balzac's economic analysis, in Flaubert's diagnosis of sentiment, in the Goncourts' clinic of the heart, or in Zola's more pretentious accumulation of data.

One of the most inventive painters of this positivist age—an age committed to techniques—was Degas, who frankly accepted photography as a mode of vision. In exploiting camera effects Degas released himself from bondage to cultural forms and came to terms with a realism that for many painters was often only a theory. Degas had the advantage of the scientist, who is emancipated from the quest for a usable past since the past is of only limited relevance in science. By his new techniques, the scientist liquidates the past and moves freely within the present and toward the future.

In sum, the nineteenth-century artist was averse to the industrial and practical techniques of his age, yet was himself a methodologist who put to aesthetic uses the very techniques which he repudiated in society. Thus art became a luxury product, depending pervertedly upon a technism which the artist deplored. Even the symbolists, who rejected nature, evolved a refined methodology for transforming actuality to pure language—a technique of *correspondance*.

Inconsistently enough, as the middle classes became devoted to art, they attacked, by scorn and censorship, every revolt against the frauds in academic art. They prosecuted Baudelaire and Flaubert; they mocked the Impressionists, who were trying to reestablish art in a more valid relation to nature.

In effect, each major painter, novelist, and poet resolved the aesthetic dilemma experimentally, or empirically, by groping toward his own method, and the strength of the century is not that it reached any reliable contemporary style but that, instead, every considerable artist possessed his own vision. Or else, like Delacroix and Corot, the artist had alternative modes of vision, experimenting with each. Wordsworth used his rhetorical and also his simple modes. Tennyson used the stripped language of "Dora" as well as the archaeological manner of the *Idylls*. Flaubert was a giant whose vision shifted—unlike Stendhal, whose vision was a constant.

Probably we should distinguish between artists who are primarily experimenters in different methods from those who find, and hold to, their own vision and *facture*. Van Gogh soon found his own *facture,* which arose from mania, not theory. Cézanne also found his own signature, as did Matisse in his oils and cutouts: abstract color of very high intensity, and flat, linear rhythms tinged seductively with the Art Nouveau that also ap-

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peared in Gauguin. When Matisse turned to sculpture in his prolonged studies for *The Back,* he moved steadily toward this abstracting of plastic form. Degas, again, possessed his own vision, as did Ibsen, Tolstoy, and George Eliot. Browning, like Degas, was an experimenter who found his own constant mode—a mode of discontinuity looking forward to the cinematic jump-cut, the montage technique, or, in another relation, the quantum leap.

By contrast, Corot had two modes of vision, his Italian (nearly cubist) mode and his Fontainebleau, or pastoral-idyllic, mode. Thus too, in our own day, Picasso was an experimenter of genius who plundered past styles, adapting each to his own purposes. And T. S. Eliot used quite different modes in the *Quartets* from what he used in earlier verse. This single or double vision is not a sign of greatness in the artist, for experimenters like Manet are as valuable as those whose vision is stable.

If the sundry methods in the nineteenth-century arts did not fuse into a period style, they did evolve into situations called "movements," each aware of its aesthetic tactic, its program, its use of a medium. Among these movements, or modes, are the picturesque, romanticism, realism, symbolism, aestheticism or decadence, Art Nouveau, and ultimately imagism. No period is more splendidly fertile in its artifices for representing. And these very personal and often contradictory modes intersect, impinging on each other at their margins until they at times become indistinguishable.

As for the intersections (or interferences, in Focillon's term): one of the revolutionary techniques was the picturesque, which was a psychic penetration of landscape by a certain mood. The picturesque was a subjective recomposing of the world, a dreamy re-creation of scenery tempered by "cultured" recollections of painting. Thus the picturesque expands into a romantic vision—a terrain so permeated by sensibility that Byron can write, ". . .to me / High mountains are a feeling." Then this projection of feeling into things translates objects into "hieroglyphs," and we have symbolism, a mode of poetry or painting where things vanish into signs for finely nuanced recognitions. But the picturesque, that herald of romantic and symbolist subjectivity, had its own realism in the details that cluttered the cottage art of George Morland, these details being assimilated into the mood of the beholder. With its fanciful ruins, the picturesque is also adaptable to the grotesque, that potent form of art valued by Ruskin and evident in Goya, Daumier, and Dickens; for, as Hazlitt said, passion can distort any object.

After the romantic self-indulgence comes Gautier's Parnassian verse, an enameled mode that serves as an early version of Art Nouveau and, perhaps, imagism. It, too, is realistic in its cameo perceptions, finely contoured. Almost by reaction to *Parnasse,* the symbolists evaporated reference to the world by disembodied allusions in a mystique of suggestion so purified of actualities that it is a technique for disappearances. Of course the world had already been partly evaporated by Wordsworth and Shelley, for the universe of things flowed through their minds. Shelley's poetry was already music, and music was created by language, which is the hieroglyphic of thought.

Denying this romantic and symbolist demolition of the world, the realists relied upon exactitudes. Realism may be the most deceptive of movements. The Impressionists began by supposing they could record what was actually perceived by the retina; and they found, as they absorbed everything into color and light, that only tonal harmonies were left. Realism in fiction was no less inconsistent. Studying his way to his narratives, Flaubert ended by wanting to write a novel that had no subject but only, as in *Madame Bovary,* a composition in color—gray. His fictions are filled with episodes nearly symbolic: the auction in *Sentimental Education,* when selling off Arnoux's properties is a paradigm for the liquidation of a society. And the death of Nana in Zola's novel suggests the mortal corruption of French culture. Ibsen's realism seems nearly allegorical. The truth of impression has invaded the truth of form, to use Ruskin's distinction. These intersections in techniques transform the techniques themselves.

Some conclusions are available, and the first is that aesthetic programs usually reach a boundary where they turn back on themselves, reversing into their opposites: realism

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into symbolism, for instance. Pure poetry becomes music; photography becomes expressionism; documentation becomes allegory. A method eventually parodies itself. At what point, for example, does Eliot's theory of the impersonality of the poet, his acquaintance with foregoing poetry, become a parody of the poetry of tradition? Answer: at the close of *The Waste Land,* referring to the *Upanishads,* Laforgue, the *Pervigilium Veneris,* Kyd, Nerval, Dante.

Or at what point does Goya's realism become a grotesque parody of realism? In the *Disasters of War.* When does Daumier's graphic become a surreal vision? In the *Rue Transnonain.* Where does Zola's naturalism convert itself into a psychic spectacle? In the underground corridors in *Germinal,* where the great white horse plunges wildly through the alleys of the collapsing mine. Ibsen's hard realism in *Ghosts* becomes a morality play, the sins of the fathers being visited upon the children. *Jude the Obscure* is a travesty of Hardy's pessimism. At their extremes, as Edgar Wind has said, methods caricature themselves almost mockingly.

This is true not only in the arts. The nineteenth century was forever talking of *the* scientific method—a method said to depend upon agnosticism, skepticism, experiment, and evidence. And *the* scientific method, based upon laboratory rituals requiring a suspension of belief, finally established the very iron laws that negated skepticism by a received theory of a natural order, an abstract system. The scientific canons of the century became a parody of the scientific method. The belief that disappeared from religion was reinstituted in the dogmas of physics and biology, leading T. H. Huxley to proclaim that there is only one kind of knowledge and only one method of obtaining that knowledge.

Deep commitments to artifice in method and methodology were premises in both the arts and the sciences in a culture that was not so truly a conflict between two cultures (art and science) as one culture relying upon techniques. For a technique is an artifice consciously used, and as Browning's Abt Vogler said of the century's arts, "Ye know why the forms are fair." Ortega judged that the great contribution of the period was its techniques, which procreated a new man, the technician.

Thus the irony mentioned by Carlyle—that a century so prizing what is natural and sincere should resort to artifice. The uses of artifice were multiple. Baudelaire clearly saw the need for artifice in an age ostensibly devoted to the natural: artifice that was sought not only in makeup for woman (especially for the prostitute) and in the dandy (living before a mirror in postures of modern heroism), but also in the preciosity of the decadent writer. Baudelaire's sanction of artifice was projected into the aestheticism of Pater, Wilde, George Moore, and the experiment of Des Esseintes, the Huysmans rebel who denied the natural in favor of the unnatural—a theme extended by André Gide from art into ethic. With a fabricated sensibility (or innocence), Gide finally proposed that the counterfeit can pass for the real, and he devised an immoralism where crime and perversion become a moral code—a disconcerting experiment consciously performed in an atmosphere of artifice. Meanwhile the scientist was experimenting in the artificial context of the laboratory under controlled conditions, deriving laws to be codified as another version of artifice.

John Stuart Mill detected the larger implications of artifice when he proposed that ethic is itself a human artifact, a means by which man modifies his natural impulses. Mill saw morality as a cultural fiction, since nature affords no criterion for civilized conduct: "All praise of Civilization, or Art, or Contrivance, is so much dispraise of Nature." Like Baudelaire, Mill leads us to the question of life imitating art, a question posed by Wilde, by Gide, by the decadents.

Art, science, morality as versions of artifice: the unacknowledged affiliation between what were allegedly incompatibles in the nineteenth century. Here we turn back to the sundry artistic movements of the age. The neomedieval revival was an artifice; the classicism and academism of the schools were artifice; the Pre-Raphaelite recoil from academism phrased itself in artificial examination of detail; Zola's naturalism was an artificial inspection, as was much of the realism affected by scientific theories; Pater's sensationalism was a programed sensitivity. The pertinent query about the century is: What kind of artifice was accepted in moral

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codes, in academism, in realism, symbolism, aestheticism, and science?

A note on our own century: Even more than in Carlyle's day, literature is a self-devouring review. The structuralist critics are treating literature as "a system within the larger system of human culture"; our novelists explore the possibility of writing a novel; our painters explore the possibility of conceiving a painting. In architecture, the Bauhaus ventured to escape from the academic trap of "style" by a design that was functional—that is, adapted to living. Then, after the Dessau phase of the Bauhaus, functionalism congealed into another academism, a theory about design. So under the aegis of functionalism we have reentered our own Palace of Art, for method has become obsessive. Form, we say, follows function. But the function is now preconceived, doubtless preordained, by those who design two World Trade Center towers, those alienated and alienating structures that testify to our recurring loss of innocence.

Departing Son

MENG CHIAO (751-814)

The loving mother stitches his traveling clothes
Before her son sets out upon his own.

Fearing the length of years till he comes back,
Her hands make sure each stitch is double-sewn.

However deep his thanks, how shall he ever
Repay the debt stitched deep into his bone?

Translated by GRAEME WILSON

GRAEME WILSON, a member of the British diplomatic service in the Far East, has recently completed translations (with Ito Aiko) of Natsume Soseki's prose, *I Am a Cat* and *Ten Nights of Dream*, and (with Atsumi Ikuko) translations of modern Japanese poetry, *Three Contemporary Japanese Poets*.

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Instructions for a Gravedigger

ROBERT CORDING

Under the lid of the body
A pair of hands will gesture for help.
Like light they clamber for openings

In the dark. But do not think
Their light will illuminate what is dark
Within you. These are the hands

Of your invention, answers for what
Is locked beyond your inquiries.
Befriend them and you will wake a ghost.

Pity none, least of all, yourself.
You cannot praise by weeping.
Wipe the epitaphs from your eyes.

Mark the boundaries between the dead
And yourself. What you feel as their
Longing is simply your desires.

Work quickly, ignoring compulsions.
Resist appropriations of meaning.
Acknowledge only what is there:

Emptiness, expansive as the holes
Where stars once were. Study
This vacancy. Learn that the dead

Are through reaching out. How like
The shapeless sea they are past weathering.
This much can be yours for fulfillment.

✪ ROBERT CORDING is completing his doctorate in English at Boston College. Other poems of his have appeared in *Commonweal*, *Southern Humanities Review*, and the *Kansas Quarterly*.

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Social Science: The Public Disenchantment (Continued)

TALCOTT PARSONS

I agree with Professor Nisbet that there has been some public disenchantment with scholars in the sciences and social sciences. I think it is important that, although the bulk of the editor's introduction concentrates on the social sciences, he uses the phrase "in the sciences and social sciences," as if the latter did not belong to the corpus of science. Whatever is true of the social sciences, they are part of a much larger corpus. "Natural and social sciences" would have been a fairer way to put it. I would agree that there has been a greater degree of disenchantment with the social than with the natural sciences, but in certain fundamental respects both categories are in the same boat.

I think that both in the title of his article, "Knowledge Dethroned," and in his characterization of what has happened, Professor Nisbet takes an extreme position. "Dethroned" is much too pejorative. This is not to deny that a wave of disenchantment has occurred, and has in fact involved all branches of science. It has not, however, been extreme in respect to either financial support or public acceptance. To take the case of financial support, the academic enterprise—including both its research and teaching functions—has not been under much more financial pressure than have, for example, municipal governments and certain socially oriented programs of the federal government.

It is alleged that two sets of factors residing in the academic establishment itself are primarily to blame for the disenchantment with the social sciences. The first is a pervasive attitude—which Nisbet calls "an alien spirit of pride, even arrogance"—among practitioners in these fields. The second is the actual failure of these practitioners to fulfill promises they are alleged to have made. It is my impression that both of these shortcomings are exaggerated by Nisbet—at least the quotes from him fail to make a number of qualifications that are essential. For example, Nisbet refers to the learned disciplines and their practitioners in general, but does not discriminate among the more responsible and cautious and the less responsible. The allegation that the failure to fulfill promises is evenly distributed within the social science profession as a whole is surely erroneous.

An unusual perspective on this matter may be provided by *The American University,* a book written by Gerald Platt and myself in 1973. Our thesis in that book is that there had been a long inflationary background behind the exceedingly rapid growth and control resources that had occurred in academia, especially since the end of the Second World War. We interpreted the student disturbances of the late 1960s and 1970 as symptoms of a deflationary turn that had followed this rapid growth, which was of importance to society. We make clear that we did not mean inflation in the economic sense, but we extend this concept to another sphere in which it had not been applied—that of intellectual or cognitive growth and expansion. In our view the same basic principles and the same kinds of sources of instability were to be found in this sphere as in the economic sphere. An expansionary-inflationary period in the economic sphere is generally expected to be followed by a reaction that bears the earmarks of deflation and recession. In ap-

TALCOTT PARSONS is professor emeritus of sociology at Harvard University. He is the author of *The Structure of Social Action, The American University,* and numerous other books. Owing to a delay in the mails, Professor Parsons's contribution to our symposium did not arrive in time to be included in our summer issue.

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plying these economic concepts to the academic sphere, we think that a very important aspect of the disenchantment that Nisbet speaks of can be characterized as a deflationary reaction to a previous inflationary period with its attendant recessionary characteristic of a diminution of confidence. We believe that the particular phenomena which Nisbet calls attention to can substantially be accounted for in these terms.

If this is the case, the attitudes of the members of the profession and their shortcomings in fulfilling their promises would be regarded, to a considerable degree, as consequences of the inflationary-deflationary process rather than as their prime motivating sources. Of course, it stands to reason that in an inflationary period much of the performance is, even by ordinary standards, far from meeting the highest possible standards. Indeed, as has happened in many other fields, in a time of enormous expansion there have been many casualties in the form of performance failures.

There is one more aspect of the matter that I would like to consider. As Edward Shils in his essay, "The Intellectuals and the Powers," brought to sharp attention long before the recent crisis of the academic world appeared, there has been in American history a long-standing ambiguity in the relations between the intellectual world, centering primarily in the universities, and the world of practical affairs, centering primarily in the business world and in government. Practical men of affairs have alleged that the academic world was visionary and impractical, and should not be taken seriously. The academic people in their turn have showed their uneasiness by adopting a political stance that is somewhat left of center, as Lipset and Ladd have recently documented with massive evidence. Indeed, there have been small groups of extremists in the academic world who have not only been left of center, but on the far left of the political spectrum, and it is very easy to attribute to the whole of the academic sector of society the views of an extremist minority.

One obvious difference between the natural and the social sciences is, of course, that recently the practical payoff from natural sciences has been massive in such fields as nuclear weapons technology and space exploration. The social sciences, much more than their natural science cousins, have been in an early stage of development in our own time. Speaking as one of their practitioners, late in a rather long career, I suggest that their recent progress has on the whole been quite creditable. Nisbet is right that they have failed to come up with adequate solutions for "urban blight, poverty, racial and ethnic tensions, crime, control of the economy, family breakdown" and other things. That they have made no contribution toward solutions in these fields is another matter, and is, I believe, an untenable assertion. They have contributed substantially in these and many other areas, but, like the biological sciences in their bearing on medicine, they have not succeeded in eradicating many types of "diseases." We are certainly at a far earlier stage of development than were the biological sciences at the end of the first third of this century. It seems to me that for anyone who really knows the fields of the natural and social sciences, it would be quite unreasonable to expect the massive practical benefits that a few of their less cautious proponents and many outsiders have expected.

Before closing, I would like to mention one other matter that seems to me significant. The main emphasis of the symposium on the social sciences in the summer issue is on attitudes of the public, not of the professionals engaged in these pursuits. Recently I have worked with pertinent data about the attitudes within the profession itself. Most of the material I have in mind is as yet unpublished, and hence cannot be referred to in detail. It indicates, however, that the core commitment to the intellectual enterprise, which seems to be a prerequisite of continuing substantial advance in these fields, remains intact. Whatever disenchantment has been characteristic of the general public outside these groups, the profession itself remains substantially committed, and there is evidence that a corresponding level of commitment is being satisfactorily transmitted to students, particularly at graduate levels.

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Publishing Joyce's Letters to His Wife

RICHARD ELLMANN

The letters Joyce wrote to his wife in 1909 were acquired by Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, in 1957. When I was preparing two volumes of Joyce's letters for publication, the question of including these particular ones came up. I wished to include them, feeling that a new generation no longer confirmed the privacy of a dead author's conjugal life. But the letters were to be published jointly by an American and an English publisher, and the degrees of allowable freedom in the two countries were different. The American publisher was willing, and the English publisher reluctant, to publish them. Legal advice was taken in 1964, and an English expert in such matters warned of a prosecution. It was therefore decided, against my own judgment, to omit the most extravagant passages. Of the sixty-four letters, fifty-four were published complete, eight were published with excisions, and two were omitted altogether.

After that time (1966), two things occurred: the climate of opinion about verbal expression changed, and Joyce scholars began to refer to, and even to quote from, the letters. The semblance of censorship seemed increasingly incongruous, and sporadic unauthorized quotation of the letters even began. In this situation, the administrators of the Joyce estate authorized publication in full.

Perhaps the circumstances in which the letters were written should be emphasized. In 1909 Joyce made his first trip back to Dublin since his elopement from that city with Nora Joyce in 1904. His wife remained in Trieste. In Dublin an Irish acquaintance maliciously led Joyce to believe that his wife had been faithless to him during a period that he held sacred, the early months of their love. In a few days he was undeceived, and he felt guilty for having so misjudged her. His first letters were filled with remorse: "What a worthless fellow I am!" But gradually he tried to turn the incident to advantage by ushering her into a greater intimacy. His letters became a turbulent mixture of erotic imagery and apologies for it, the apologies being accompanied by equally extreme flights of adoration. His relationship with her had to counterbalance all his rifts with other people. Having become partners in spiritual love, they must now share an onanistic complicity, agitating each other to sexual climax by means of their letters. In this way, Joyce renewed the conspiratorial and passionate understanding that they had had when they first left Ireland together.

These letters present Joyce with more intensity than any other letters by him. Often they transfer habitual attitudes to a different plane; he does not ask her for more money, as he does others, but for more proof of affection. He reminds her constantly of his art, often combining it with love tokens. He promises her a necklace inscribed with a line from one of his poems, and he also laboriously copies out on parchment the poems of *Chamber Music* for her alone. His art is the lofty counterpart of that deeper nature he will otherwise divulge only to her. And he mixes his pleas with tender rebuke, scolding her for scolding him. She is too rude to him, ruder than he deserves. To vary the note, he sometimes delights in acknowledging his faults, including his infidelities with prostitutes, in imagining her as even more merciless to him,

RICHARD ELLMANN is the author of *James Joyce*, *The Identity of Yeats*, and *Golden Codgers*, and is editor of the *Selected Letters* of James Joyce.

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as whipping him like the ladies of Sacher-Masoch, and with furs on to complete the picture. "You have me completely in your power," he enjoys telling her, pleased to have, as whipping boy, her undivided attention. Then, to renew his innocence and hers, he leans upon her as if she were a mother, and longs to be her child or even her unborn infant: "Take me into the dark sanctuary of your womb. Shelter me, dear, from harm!" He adores her as "my beautiful wild flower of the hedges, my dark-blue rain drenched flower," and compares her to the Virgin, then desecrates this romantic lyricism by naming her his "fuckbird" instead. One moment he is an angel, the next a frog, and then back again. He likes to boast of his prudishness with men, at whose dirty stories he never even smiles, to give a greater secretive value to his outspokenness with her and to indicate that this erotic singleness must prove the essential innocence of his nature.

The atmosphere is not one of Catholic guilt, but it is certainly not one of pagan insouciance either. He feels compelled to set images of purity against images of impurity. He dwells upon the association of the sexual and excretory organs, then fears she will consider him corrupt, although he has found learned sanction in Spinoza; yet he also wants corruption to be a part of their love along with incorruption. "Are you too, then, like me," he asks hopefully, "one moment high as the stars, the next lower than the lowest wretches?" They must share in shame, shamelessness, and unashamedness.

To have buried these letters in archives, available only for scholarly consultation, would not have been possible. They were already in clandestine circulation among those who had consulted the archives at Cornell. That Joyce would not have wanted the letters published may be true, although he did not destroy them as he could have done, but they constitute an invaluable document for illuminating both the motive power of his works and the position from which he wrote.

That he can continue to outrage sensibilities now, thirty-five years after his death, is a testimony to his nature. As a young man he could not get work in Ireland because he was considered too outspoken. When he wrote *Dubliners* in the first years of this century, two publishers in turn promised to publish it, and then at the last moment, under pressure from various powers, declined to do so. To publish his first novel, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man,* a new publishing firm had to be set up in London. When the first chapters of *Ulysses* were published in New York in the *Little Review,* the magazine was suppressed by the police. After that, no English or American publisher dared to accept *Ulysses*. Sylvia Beach in Paris constituted herself a publisher and brought it out in 1922. Not until the 1930s could it be published in New York or London. Some parts of Joyce's last book, *Finnegans Wake,* were also refused by magazines on the grounds of indecency.

So if there is now a furore over the publication of his letters to his wife, this is simply the last of a series of violent reactions to the intention that he had, in public as well as in private, to tell the truth about other people's behavior and about his own. He wrote in an early poem, "The Holy Office," that his holy office was to say the things that his contemporaries were too prudish to say:

> That they may dream their dreamy dreams
> I carry off their filthy streams . . .
> Thus I relieve their timid arses,
> Perform my office of Katharsis.
> My scarlet leaves them white as wool,
> Through me they purge a bellyful.

Frank as these letters are, their psychology can easily be misunderstood. They were deliberate fantasies, intended to accomplish sexual gratification in him and inspire the same in his wife, and at moments they fasten intently, as such fantasies always do, on peculiarities of sexual behavior, some of which might technically be called perverse although the line is increasingly difficult to draw in our time. They display traces of fetishism, anality, paranoia, and masochism, but before quartering Joyce into these or similar categories and consigning him to their tyranny, we must remember that Joyce was capable, in his work, of ridiculing them all as Circean beguilements. He could turn them into vaudeville routines as he did in the Nighttown episode of *Ulysses* and throughout *Finnegans Wake.*

Then, too, the letters rebuke such obvious labels by an ulterior purpose: besides the im-

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mediate physical goal, Joyce wishes to anatomize and reconstitute and crystallize the emotion of love. He goes further still. Like Richard Rowan in his play *Exiles,* Joyce wishes to possess his wife's soul, and have her possess his, in utter nakedness. To know someone else beyond love and hate, beyond vanity and remorse, beyond human possibility almost, is his extravagant desire.

I hope that readers will not only countenance this correspondence, but recognize its value as an extreme of Joyce's—and perhaps of human—utterance. They may do so more readily because the letters are superbly written, in obscene poetry.

The blunt ardor of these letters is made more subtle and complex in Joyce's works, which are many-minded as these letters are single-minded. But his books too are frank in presenting all the processes—masturbation, defecation, urination, menstruation, copulation, polymorphous sexuality. What Joyce sought in all his works was a primal accuracy of response, unparalleled in its truthfulness, so that for once at least the world might behold a man as he was within. In this mission he was completing the work which Rousseau had begun two hundred years before. Those who wish to keep him from baring his soul do him a disservice. And as Rousseau wrote, "Let any man who dares, say 'I am a better man than he.' "

Sonnenkitsch

CHILDREN OF THE SUN. *By Martin Green. Basic Books. $15.*

Reviewed by KARL MILLER

Martin Green once wrote a book called *A Mirror for Anglo-Saxons,* in which he celebrated his recent translation from England to America. America was good, and the country he had left behind him was rotten with gentility and conventionality. But the English need not despair. There were always Leavis and Amis. Not long before, there had been Orwell. Earlier, the reader began to feel, there had been Cromwell. There were "decent men" about who might lead the country to a better future, with their straight talk, their open-necked shirts, their bicycles and Larkin-like bicycle clips. These hopes were expressed in 1961. Even then, the reader might have reflected that Leavis and Amis were decent men who appeared to disapprove of each other, and that Leavis was already willing to convey that he thought Amis's conduct highly indecent. As the years went by, Mr. Green perceived that Amis, no cyclist at the best of times, was moving from decency into dandyism, and this has caused him to change his tune. Still in America, Green is now a keen student, at least, of dandyism. His new book, part two of a kind of *Bildungsroman,* commends a set of culture heroes most of whose faces would have cracked that mirror for Anglo-Saxons. None of them would have been seen dead on a bike.

Mr. Green discusses "the imaginative life of English high culture between 1918 and 1957," and does so in terms of "the temperamental styles cultivated among intellectuals and artists and their work." Can you cultivate a temperamental style? Possibly. But these first words do a little to prepare one for a book written, apparently, at top speed and sometimes carelessly and ungrammatically, a book that thrusts into footnotes matters of definition that deserve to be treated in the main text. These temperamental styles of his belong, Mr. Green states, to three types of human being: the dandy, the rogue, and the naïf. Further types that might be held responsible for the high culture of the period are largely ignored. The three types are called "Children of the Sun," or *Sonnenkinder.* This term is derived from the diffusionist anthropology of quite a long time ago—from T. J. Perry and Bakofen or Bachofen (the name is spelled both ways on page 14). But an appendix explains that the reader need not take very seriously the references to the cult of Osiris, to the mother goddess and her radiant son.

Of greater consequence to Mr. Green's argument, and of direct concern to several of the people he is describing, is the psychology associated with the *commedia*

KARL MILLER has been literary editor of the *Spectator* and the *New Statesman* and editor of the *Listener.* He is now the Lord Northcliffe Professor of Modern English Literature at University College, London.

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dell'arte—with Pierrot, Harlequin, and Columbine. Not infrequently, the *Sonnenkinder* turn out to be homosexual. The "golden lads" who fell in the Great War were both more and less *Sonnenkinder* than the ensuing generation of upper-class dandies, rogues, naïfs, aesthetes, wits, wags, black sheep, and defectors to Moscow with whom the book is chiefly occupied. This is what a footnote says, while admitting that these golden lads had promised to combine Adonis and Apollo and to become the men their fathers were—which is the opposite of *Sonnenkind* behavior, directed as it usually is at a repudiation of fathers. Many lads fell in the war; these lads are golden by virtue of having been illustrious members of the more illustrious public (that is, private) schools. One may want to add that they are golden by virtue of the substantial amounts of money owned by their parents, and that this kind of money may be included among the meanings of the term "high culture." Dedicated to "the two Old Etonians" among the author's friends, the book appears to take it for granted that those responsible for forty years of high culture in England were almost all public schoolboys, which is the kind of thing that some people would expect of all high cultures. Mr. Green is especially interested in two of his public schoolboys: Harold Acton and Brian Howard.

This is a rash, readable book, whose quaintness is immediately evident in its prefatory account of the author's fluttered visit—as if to Canossa—to Harold Acton's palatial Florentine house. This scholarship boy, a type much despised by dandies, has come to La Pietra in order to impart his new, repentant view of his old enemies. *Per ardua ad Acton.* But his visit is not without arduousness. "What was I doing in a golden bed?" He does not ply his host with questions on such sore or delicate subjects as the latter's opinion of Brian Howard, with whom Acton eventually had quarreled and who had committed suicide. Instead, Mr. Green marvels at the grandeur. He gets down on his knees to measure the dimensions of apartments; his own bathroom is twenty-four feet by eighteen. When Harold Acton inquired, "I trust you do not object to royalty?" Green's eyes "flew" to a nearby photograph of Princess Margaret. "Was Princess Margaret in person going to emerge from a door?" But Acton only meant that Green might like to go to lunch with ex-Queen Helen of Romania and ex-Princess Olga of Yugoslavia.

The early panache displayed by the chosen pair is given attention, which the best examples of Howard's destructive wit certainly repay. During the Second World War his mother ran a shop in London that sold Mary Chess cosmetics. "When in danger of losing an argument, Brian would dab some Mary Chess perfume on his opponent and say, 'Now that you smell like a tart, my dear, your arguments carry very little weight.' " Green comments: "So in a sense Mary Chess represented to him what La Pietra did to Harold Acton." But only very approximately, since Acton's cherished house came to him from his father, with whom he did not get on, whereas Howard got on with his mother and could feel ashamed of her scents. A contemporary of the two at school has recalled: "One time I happened to be at the Alhambra when Brian and Harold walked into the stalls, in full evening dress, with long white gloves draped over one arm, and carrying silver-topped canes and top-hats, looking perhaps like a couple of Oscar Wildes. My stepmother was astonished at the sight of them, and thought they must be foreigners. I was much too nervous, at about fifteen, to say that they were two of my great friends from Eton." Green comments: "This anecdote shows us in dramatic form the kind of leadership the pair established over their more imaginative contemporaries at school, and how essentially it was a matter of appreciating Diaghilev and the ballet." It seems, essentially, to have been a matter of appreciating evening dress, and why should we think this particular contemporary imaginative?

Mr. Green prefers to base his claims for the importance of his Children on biographical or hagiographical evidence rather than on any protracted study of their writings, and, to my mind, these claims are often exaggerated. "All England in those years could be seen as an extension of Oxford, homogeneous with it in imaginative substance." The years were 1922 to 1925, and for "all England" it might be safer to read: those who knew, or knew about, smart Oxford undergraduates

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A Glossary of Faulkner's South

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who had gone on, or would soon go on, to fresh glamor in London. Once again, the word "imaginative" would have to do some hard work if the related claim were to be regarded as persuasive.

According to Mr. Green, "all England" was later to admire the rogue Guy Burgess, and was encouraged to do so by acquaintance with Evelyn Waugh's character, Basil Seal. It is suggested that Lord Rothschild, who recently retired as head of the British government's Think Tank, admired, and was bamboozled by, Burgess. He lived for a while in Rothschild's house, which "became a centre of Dionysianism for highly placed people in wartime London." "It is said that Burgess took compromising photographs of Donald Maclean there"—his fellow spy. "Certainly he exerted blackmailing pressure on his own former lovers, and kept compromising letters from them for that purpose." Elsewhere we learn how Bloomsbury's cult of personal relationships affected the *Sonnenkinder*: but then Burgess was no Pierrot. Whether or not Lord Rothschild admired him, I am sure that most people in Britain had never heard of him until he was revealed as a Russian spy whose attitude toward personal relationships differed sharply from E. M. Forster's. Mr. Green sees the secret services of the period as deeply penetrated by *Sonnenkinder,* with recruitment determined by narrow considerations of class, and he does not seem to be wrong or merely "imaginative."

So all England did this, and all England did that. "Although it is unfair from many points of view to take the secret services as typically British, or the Manhattan Project as typically American, history persuades us to do so." He means that his book might persuade us to do so. If the secret services at their most hidebound and inefficient and corrupt were typically British, it might just be possible to say that all England admired Guy Burgess. Meanwhile history will have to refrain from persuading us that the CIA of twenty years later has been typically American.

At school, Acton and Howard edited an enterprising magazine, the *Eton Candle*. Having related how they published verse by Aldous Huxley, the book points out: "The modern movement was perceptibly, at Eton, launched." Modernism did not get started on the playing fields of Eton, or behind the pavilions, but occasionally we are invited to believe that Eton helped it to flourish. Howard wrote many reviews for the *New Statesman,* but Mr. Green does not make him out to be a major writer: the claims on behalf of Acton are intended to carry more weight, my dear. Lines are quoted from one of the poems in *Aquarium*:

> Voluptuously blatant in my greed, I am
> the woman garbed in heliotrope,
> Whose bustle panics peacocks in the park.
> Some take my mellow notes for rosaries—
> So holy, steadfast, pure they seem to be.
> (Like dear Prince Albert on a promenade,
> Inspired apostle of the simple life,
> With all his homely virtues on parade.)
> And I am music's Edinburgh rock,
> A laxative caressing to the ear. . . .

Mr. Green comments: "The strength of that seems to lie in the frankness of the fear of large women, and the juxtaposition of the women with the peacocks. The weakness is the camp tone about Prince Albert. . . ." This is a little desperate; perhaps it would have been better had he set himself to write at length about Acton's historical work. He finds a good deal to say about his sufferings during the Second World War: they resembled those of other Sun Children, whose dossiers contained black marks and blackballs and who were not promoted as they should have been. Acton—in appearance, speech, and deportment very much as one might imagine Henry James (a likeness mentioned by Mr. Green)—felt himself to be nature's ambassador, but was snubbed by the War Office when he applied for a job. The eye flies to the foot of that page, to the words "he was wounded . . ." The sentence continues: "to discover that his parents were afraid that he would make a fool of himself as a lecturer." For a less enchanted view of Harold Acton, and for the light it throws on the notion that dandies are seldom kind to each other, the reader would do well to look at a piece by Gore Vidal in the February 5, 1976, *New York Review of Books.*

No matter what there may be to say about key points of execution, however, there can be no doubt that this book has a subject. The

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quarrel between dandies and decent men, cavaliers and puritans, is a hereditary element in English life, and the naïf can be seen as a version of romanticism's orphan or outcast: old postures of alienation, of resistance to fathers, have been renewed. But Mr. Green's *Sonnenkind* types need to be elaborated and supplemented. One category that needs to be added is that of the wit; and the generic name should have been discarded, I think, together with its anthropology. I also think that he should have written more freely about homosexuality—a unifying factor and a way of life for several of his people—and about the adjacent theme, in this context, of sexual capacity and incapacity. The difference between those *Sonnenkinder* who were homosexual and those who were not should certainly have been explored. To a considerable extent, the significance of Green's categories must lie in that special awareness of the mother which has been attributed to various homosexualities, which can lead the same person both to seek and to dispense with social approval, and which often appears to inform the self-imagined orphan condition from the nineteenth century onward. For all that, it can be agreed that Mr. Green's types correspond to observed behaviors and literary styles of the time. Waugh's accessibility to such experience is dealt with very well, and Eliot's is worth attending to. With his talk of white flannel trousers, Prufrock leans toward a dandyism that can be seen to belong to the same time as Wodehouse's silly asses; and the ironies and decor of Eliot's early verse are being attempted in Acton's lines about his silly lady. Prufrock, too, has something of a *commedia* sadness, and Diaghilev might have decreed that he be danced.

Mr. Green does not take himself to be siding with either of his two contending camps, let alone with camp itself. He is not pressing for some kind of Greening of Britain, appreciative though he is of the "playfulness and youthfulness" of Britain's dandy past. He imagines himself, in conclusion, to be up in a balloon, watching the action. His message is that Nabokov is admirable, and that the critic must be "ready to be a bit of a Diaghilev as well as a bit of a Leavis." Here once again he figures as a virtuoso of the unpromising conjunction. But it is a relief that he no longer believes that an interest in the one excludes an interest in the other.

Dandyism is currently very strong in English reviewing. Most of the successful new reviewers fall within the temperamental span examined in this book. Auberon Waugh is a talented comic writer who sneers for England—but not all England—and who seems to be worried that he might lose caste or confidence if he stopped insulting and libeling his inferiors; this *Sonnenkind* cannot be held to be resisting his father. Alastair Forbes tells clever stories, with French words in them, about the Duchess of Windsor and, as it were, ex-Princess Olga of Yugoslavia. The decent man has suffered, as Forbes would put it, a *dégringolade*, and we can expect him to be fairly silent about this book, and perhaps reluctant to read it. He may suppose that he is being asked to rummage through the regalia of ex-queens of Eton, and he may not want to be told that Balanchine and Stravinsky were "powerfully sane, objective, Apollonian," so that it was "no mere coincidence" that they remained members of the Russian Orthodox Church. He may not want to pore over a photograph of beautiful people at a 1920s Oxford party—well-fed but not particularly well-favored young pups, hard, hostile, vacant, a *jeunesse* that might have provided Al Capone with a bodyguard. He may consider that a number of these men of taste were wholly at the mercy of received opinion, and that a number of these pioneers of fashion were singularly lacking in invention. Nevertheless, if the decent do read the book, they may decide that it is able to tell them about the common ground shared by some good artists, and about a phase of cultural history which is still only imperfectly understood.

After writing these words, I noticed an item in the London *Times* that had a bearing on Mr. Green's subject. It was an obituary by Anthony Powell (who is in this book) of Sir John Heygate (who might have been in it). "In appearance, tall, good-looking, with an easy rather lounging carriage, John Heygate had reacted against that side of his father, the Eton housemaster, whose reputation for correctness in dress and demeanour had given Edwardian society the verb to 'heygate,' or 'do a heygate,' meaning to act in an uncompromisingly conventional manner." Mr.

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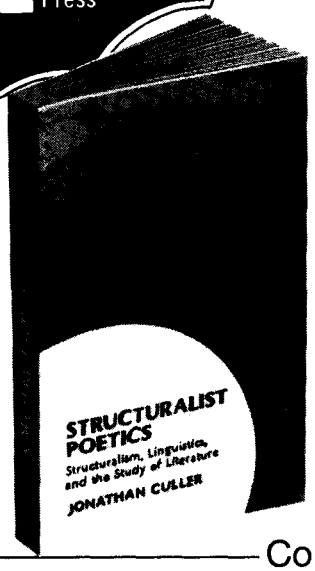

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Green is concerned with uncompromising (and compromising) sons who obeyed a convention which proposed that they act in a manner both conventional and unconventional. Sir John wrote an Eton novel entitled *Decent Fellows*—a different decency from the one Green used to praise. It seems that he failed to flourish, and shut himself in black moods and an Irish country house, describing himself in *Who's Who* as "writer (retired)": an outcome not unlike more than one of those chronicled in Green's *Sonnenkind Who's Who*. Others of the species went on writing, however, and now the *Sonnenkind* can be said to have risen again in the London journals.

Making Meats End

ANIMAL LIBERATION. *By Peter Singer. New York Review Book. $10.*

Reviewed by GERALD DWORKIN

Contemporary moral philosophy seldom changes the moral views of philosophers, much less the world. By and large, the positions that are advocated reflect the moral views of white, middle-class, liberal academicians living in an affluent, technological society. Even when they express views that divide opinions—say on abortion—one feels that lives are not touched. None of us are fetuses, only half of us are women, and relatively few women will face the decision to abort or not. Any argument about political positions outside the liberal consensus—right-wing libertarianism—takes place in a context that makes it an "academic" question. We are not about to abolish or drastically limit the state collectively, and there seems to be little we can do individually.

None of this is true with respect to what Peter Singer calls "animal liberation." His position is strange enough to run the risk of being considered cranky. If he is correct, then most of us are engaging in seriously evil acts (three times) daily. Further, there is a feasible alternative way of behaving that we are obliged to adopt: stop eating the flesh of animals. That this alternative is feasible does not mean that it will be easy for many people. The pleasures of the flesh (in both readings) are not lightly abandoned. The importance of food in one's life varies widely among individuals; for some, food plays the same role as music or the theater does for others. If philosophical reflection can force anyone to give up Moo Shi Pork or Oie Rotie aux Pruneaux, it is not without its powers.

Peter Singer's book is a thoughtful and well-written mixture of moral argument, journalism, and how-to (become a vegetarian). Most of the philosophical material is contained in the first chapter. The next two chapters relate, in considerable detail, facts about animal experimentation and the manner in which animals are raised for human consumption. The final portions of the book present additional arguments for vegetarianism, some discussion of where to draw the line (eggs? milk? clams?), a short history of Western attitudes toward animals, and a useful appendix on vegetarian shopping and cooking. It is a book that ought to be widely read and discussed.

I shall confine my attention to the moral arguments in the chapter titled "All Animals Are Equal," and shall maintain they are not convincing. Nevertheless, I believe that if the facts in Singer's chapter on factory farms are as he presents them, then his conclusions follow from premises that almost all of us accept.

The claim Singer makes about our moral relations with animals (following him, I shall use the term "animal" to denote nonhuman creatures) is one about the equality of humans and animals—not, of course, as a description but as a normative assertion about our treatment of animals.

> The basic principle of equality does not require equal or identical treatment; it requires equal consideration . . .
>
> . . . the interests of every being affected by an action are to be taken into account and given the same weight as the like interests of any other being.
>
> If a being suffers, there can be no moral justification for refusing to take that suffering into consideration. No matter what the nature of the being,

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the principle of equality requires that its suffering be counted equally with the like suffering—in so far as rough comparisons can be made—of any other being.

To avoid specieism we must allow that beings which are similar in all relevant respects have a similar right to life—and mere membership in our own biological species cannot be a morally relevant criterion for this right.

The basic idea, then, is that creatures who have interests must have those interests taken into account, and given equal weight with equal interests, in deciding how to behave toward them. This is compatible with the view that different species have different interests because of different characteristics. Thus it is not specieism to assert that

it is worse to kill a normal adult human, with a capacity for self-awareness, and the ability to plan for the future and have meaningful relationships with others, than to kill a mouse, which presumably does not share all these characteristics.

What *is* specieism—and hence for Singer unjustifiable—is to assert that the mere fact that a creature is human is morally relevant.

My first difficulty might be put this way: How "mere" is the fact that a being is human, looks human, and is born of humans? Consider an analogue. I may be faced with the choice between rescuing, or helping in some milder fashion, one of two persons—my child and a stranger. If I favor my child and am called upon to justify my choice, is it not enough to point to the "mere" fact that it is *my* child? Do I have to refer to some further feature that my child possesses and the stranger does not? The questions are rhetorical, but they do not rest on fiat. One can portray in detail the life that would result from a morality that carried the notion of impartiality beyond all reason. It is not just that special relationships impose special obligations, but that certain forms of trust and commitment are not possible if some possibilities are not ruled out in advance. One of these possibilities is the idea that whether or not one will be aided will depend on some judgment made impartially. If something like this is built into the structure of our moral judgments concerning particular persons, something similar may operate at the level of the species.

Singer, who believes that there must be some morally relevant property other than that of biological species, tries to show that there is no property possessed only by humans that entitles their interests to receive more weight than those of animals. For any proposed property that seems to have moral relevance is variable among humans and hence could be used to justify treating some humans in the same manner as we treat all animals. Thus, as applied to intelligence: "If possessing a higher degree of intelligence does not entitle one human to use another for his own ends, how can it entitle humans to exploit nonhumans for the same ends?"

This argument is invalid, for it overlooks the possibility of morally significant thresholds. While intelligence (or the ability to invest one's life with meaning, or to form significant relationships, or to have a life plan) may vary among humans, it might be that all humans (who are not grossly damaged) possess the relevant characteristic at a level higher than that of any animal, and that level of complexity makes the life and interests of humans worth more.

What about the existence of some persons who are so severely damaged that they fall below what we consider to be the human threshold? If we are not prepared to use them as experimental subjects or sources of food or entertainment, are we not forced by the requirements of consistency to revise our attitudes toward animals? As should be obvious, consistency can only require us to make similar judgments about similar cases. It is at least plausible to suppose that we do have a right to treat such persons like the animals whose levels of complexity are similar to theirs, but that we refrain from doing so (for various psychological and sociological reasons) and, by treating them better than they have a right to be treated, escape moral censure.

Finally, it seems to me that Singer's position is undermined by his commitment to utilitarianism. For the most part, he avoids the notion of rights—perhaps out of Benthamite caution concerning the pertinence of the notion. But it is difficult to see how some such idea can be avoided. Once we begin to

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calculate, even in some rough and ready way, the balance of pleasure and pain involved in our treatment of animals, we shall get results that are incompatible with Singer's concerns. Bentham's defense of admitting animals into our moral calculations is often quoted: "The question is not, Can they reason? nor Can they talk? but, Can they suffer?" Less well known is Bentham's conclusion on the matter:

> . . . there is very good reason why we should be suffered to eat such of them as we like to eat; we are the better for it, and they are none the worse. They have none of those long-protracted anticipations of future misery which we have. The death they suffer in our hands commonly is, and always may be, a speedier, and by that means a less painful one, than that which would await them in the inevitable course of nature.

Singer believes that in this passage Bentham "lowered [his] normal standards of argument." On the contrary. Utilitarian arguments lead to the defense of bullfighting on the grounds that the pleasure of the many spectators outweighs the harm to the bull. And if the same cannot be said for eating a steer, the solution would seem to be technological: raise *very large* animals.

Even if these objections are sound, and one cannot reconstruct superior arguments, at most what could be morally defended is the policy that Hume designated as "gentle usage." We may use animals for our ends, but not torture them. And it is a fact that, for the most part, and to an increasing extent, the animals we consume are raised under conditions that amount to torture. Perhaps the most extreme case is that of the calves who are raised for veal. To maintain the light color of the meat, and to raise as large an animal as possible, these calves are removed from their mothers while still nursing, confined in narrow stalls, chained to prevent them from turning around, deprived of straw or other bedding which they might eat and thus spoil the paleness of their flesh; they are forbidden roughage, and deliberately deprived of adequate iron. To suppose that we can justify participating in such cruelty by purchasing and eating such animals for our additional aesthetic satisfaction is grotesque. Similar conditions, though less extreme, hold with respect to raising chickens and pigs for consumption.

No far-reaching social reform takes place without harnessing the self-interest of many individuals in its support. Since animals are in no position to secure decent treatment for themselves, it is fortunate that there are so many reasons in favor of a vegetarian diet. It is cheaper; it is healthier. And feeding a calf twenty-one pounds of protein to produce one pound of animal protein is ecologically insane. We now recognize the health advantages that accrued to those nineteenth-century Quakers who refused to eat sugar because it was produced by slave labor. Perhaps nature arranges it so that our health and our moral obligations run parallel.

I shall not discuss the brutalities inflicted upon experimental animals for the greater glory of science and profit. There are obviously serious conflicts of interest in those (probably few) cases where important medical and scientific advances depend upon animal experimentation. But much of the work that takes place in experimental laboratories may best be thought of as the unedifiable in pursuit of the trivial.

Prose from Poets

A KIND OF ORDER, A KIND OF FOLLY. Essays and Conversations. *By Stanley Kunitz. Little Brown. $10.*

MEMOIRS AND OPINIONS 1926-1974. *By Allen Tate. Swallow Press. $8.95.*

Reviewed by WILLIAM F. CLAIRE

Two recent prose collections by prominent American poets—one a first gathering by Stanley Kunitz, the other representing a culmination of sorts of the literary interests and friendships of Allen Tate's life—show many similarities of two gifted men leading highly cultivated and productive lives. There are also differences of style, temperament, and geography. Kunitz, currently poet-in-residence at the Library of Congress, speaks in-

WILLIAM F. CLAIRE, former editor of *Voyages,* is currently director of the Washington, D.C. office of the State University of New York. He is a poet and essayist.

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formally as an urbane city dweller attuned to the latest developments in his art and the vitality of events around him. Tate is content, as he has demonstrated throughout his career, to reflect upon the main influences of his life from a rural, somewhat detached setting.

The Kunitz book represents the varied interests of a poet who first came to public attention with the traditionally thin volume of verse, *Intellectual Things*, in the 1920s. It has a freshness and a "kind of order, kind of folly" treatment of many contemporary events that is rarely found in a collection of previously published essays, random speeches, and remarks made for "occasional" situations. As a principal participant in the development of American verse since the twenties, he is obviously very knowledgeable about all significant trends since that time, and is also *au courant* with new poetic activities here and abroad. His recent visits to the Soviet Union are a case in point. He not only engaged the leading figures there in intimate conversation but he also translated some of them, and is on solid ground in making many profound observations about the state of the art in both societies, at least the public manifestations thereof. In a conversation with Andrei Voznesensky, when the latter says being a poet is "like going to bed on TV, with everybody looking . . . sometimes I think it's too terrible . . . like being in a zoo," Kunitz observes, "But at least, Andrei, we're our own keepers."

Kunitz "keeps" himself contemporary in a way few older poets do, by reading and following younger writers. Through some form of extended penance that he doesn't seem to mind, he reads hundreds of manuscripts as judge for the Yale Series of Younger Poets, and from the piles selects a winner each year. Five young poets—Hugh Seidman, Peter Klappert, Michael Casey, Robert Hass, and Michael Ryan—whom he calls "on the threshold" are discussed here in what were prefaces to their first volumes. The essays should lead others to the texts, not only to test their judgments against Kunitz's, but to sample the new writing, much of it a product of the past decade. Kunitz may be the only poet of his generation who truly knows what is going on among young poets, and his choices are worth considering.

His prose style ranges from deft brushstroke impressions of a former neighbor and friend, e.e. cummings, to more considered critical appraisals of Conrad Aiken and Robinson Jeffers. He has a lengthy conversation with Robert Lowell, which represents an intelligent colloquy between peers with many of the same inclinations, and it is far more valuable than the usual journalistic interview by someone well briefed on his subject. There are some twenty additional pieces on much-discussed poets such as Wallace Stevens, and also forgotten poets such as Kenneth Fearing. The poet singled out for the most attention is Theodore Roethke, the "poet of my generation who meant the most to me," and whose own experiences represent a continuing theme in the Kunitz volume. He says of Roethke that "if the transformations of his experience resist division into mineral, vegetable and animal categories, it is because the levels are continually overlapped, intervolved, in the manifold tissue."

All the Kunitz explorations, whether describing visits back to his roots in Worcester, Massachusetts, or discussing his views of contemporary painters (he has extremely close ties to the world of visual arts), seem interconnected in the "manifold tissue" of his deep humanistic understanding. In "Sister Arts," for example, he demonstrates the possibilities and the actual relationships that have existed between poets and painters through the years. He has no fear in dealing with a subject difficult to generalize about, and often, in the process, transforms his subject matter with brilliant insights and discoveries.

Taken together, this most readable collection represents a testament to one of our best poets, who realizes that "in the midst of this random and absurd universe, one must begin by affirming the value of one's own existence; but that the affirmation must not be too glib or too cheaply won; it must rise out of the wrestling with all that denies it, to the very point of negation." In his ability to affirm the value of his own existence and to share his views in a solidly organized volume of prose, Kunitz has amply demonstrated that he continues to move, as he stated recently, "toward a more expansive universe" and that he proposes to "take more risks" than ever before.

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Allen Tate is the kind of man of letters who is vanishing from the American scene. He has remained a central figure for more than half a century because of his impressive body of poetry, his classical learning, his intellectual integrity, and his friendships with many of the most important writers of the century.

Memoirs and Opinions has two principal parts, with a separate beginning and an unusual ending. It opens with a vividly written autobiographical essay about Tate's boyhood in the deep South, and ends with "A Sequence of Stanzas" read to a group of friends in Tennessee on his seventy-fifth birthday in 1974. In between, one section consists of previously published essays that have had a lasting influence on American letters, and the other contains many newly written memoirs or tributes to his closest friends and colleagues.

While Tate's opening reminiscence of his childhood appears to presage a more formal autobiography, he soon dismisses an endeavor of this kind, feeling that "if the year before last is hard to remember, or if remembered as not quite one's own year, what can one make of the palimpsest of one's life sixty years ago, each layer of which looks like a language different from all others?" He believes that "however truthful the memorialist may try to be, his anecdotal recollections will be closer to fiction than history." So he sets out, instead, to capture the men and movements of his time, not as the whole truth but as "signatures" that point to "persons and events once as real as Johnson's cane tapping the pavements."

Tate's years with the Fugitives become very memorable in essays about his close relationships with members of that circle, principally Donald Davidson, Robert Penn Warren, and John Crowe Ransom. Each is treated separately, and Tate's memory tends to be precise and selective; we are given just enough about each one. We are treated to penetrating observations about men trained as classical scholars, men who were direct with one another and who shared many common traditions and ideals—Tate calls them *literae humaniores*. Tate, the only undergraduate at Vanderbilt invited to join the early meetings of the Fugitives, is in a perfect historical position to describe the group, and future researchers will have to take his views into account. Nor is he averse to recalling humorous moments, like sticking pins into a sleeping Robert Penn Warren during college days so Warren would wake up and report on his dreams. A rare commonality existed among Tate's circle of friends, all of whom were either Tennesseans or Kentuckians. Admittedly pushing propriety aside, Tate feels that in this group "there never was so much talent, knowledge, and character accidentally brought together in one American place in our time."

Six years after he graduated from Vanderbilt, Tate received a Guggenheim and was well on his way to a life of literary distinction. No sooner had he arrived in Paris than he was immediately ushered into the salon of Gertrude Stein and other figures living in Paris in the late 1920s. Tate describes "Miss Toklas' American Cake" and several well-known personalities of the era, and his Paris memories are among the most candid in print. He was an equal among equals: he spent time with Sylvia Beach, Fitzgerald, and Hemingway, although he admits that "I couldn't bring myself to tell what was wrong with my friends—or even mere acquaintances—without trying to tell what was wrong with myself," and says of Hemingway's revelations in *A Moveable Feast,* "I couldn't have known then he was the complete son of a bitch who would later write about certain friends." Tate, a southern gentleman, chooses to remember more positive attributes of his friends without in any way becoming sentimental.

Memoirs and Opinions represents a departure in tone and style from previous Tate books, as befits a man remembering such colleagues as John Peale Bishop, St. John Perse, and T. S. Eliot, the latter of whom represents a kind of cultural hero to Tate. The less formal tone is continued in the essays Tate chooses to revive, essays that are not concerned with "poetry and fiction as actualizations of culture" but with a "less severe purpose." His "opinions" cover Frost as a metaphysical poet, Hart Crane's "White Buildings" (a 1926 essay that retains considerable authority and power), the poetry of Poe and Valéry, and other commentaries on Faulkner, Henry James, and Joyce. Like Edmund Wilson's

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work, Tate's criticism transcends itself and becomes art in its own right. In all, this most readable Tate work is in fact a kind of autobiography of a man who lived the life of the mind, and a volume that future critics, scholars, and others interested in twentieth-century literature will want to consult.

Paradoxical Puritans

THE PURITAN ORIGINS OF THE AMERICAN SELF. *By Sacvan Bercovitch. Yale University Press. $15.*

Reviewed by CUSHING STROUT

In the nineteenth century even a French Catholic like Tocqueville and a Jewish rationalist like Freud admired the Puritans. By the 1920s, however, Puritanism for most American intellectuals had become a synonym for prudishness and prohibition. In the 1940s a nucleus of Harvard scholars, most notably Perry Miller, rediscovered American Puritans not only with empathy but with some sense of their pertinence to the history that came after them. Miller's students have kept them alive as scholarly topics, despite a climate in which naïve notions of liberation from all repressions are clamorously pervasive among "the herd of independent minds." Sacvan Bercovitch has entered the lists with an essay that I, as a student of Miller's, think he would have relished—not least for its audacity in calling Cotton Mather, of all people, "the first major writer" to infuse the term "American" with "the imaginative power it has carried ever since."

Bercovitch shares Miller's passionate interest in the issue of national identity. Like him, he is unapologetically engaged in doing intellectual history at a time when that is very unfashionable in the historical profession, now bemused with social, economic, and ethnic topics. (One of Miller's most productive students, Edmund S. Morgan of Yale, has moved out of Puritan territory into an economic and demographic historiography about the origins of American slavery.) Like Miller at Harvard, Bercovitch at Columbia teaches literature, and both have been fascinated by the romantics.

This book is a densely written and impressively erudite elaboration of a single Puritan text and method. Cotton Mather's "The Life of John Winthrop," from his *Magnalia Christi Americana; or, The Ecclesiastical History of New England*, is the text. The method is the "hermeneutical mode connecting the Old Testament to the New in terms of the life of Jesus," and by figural extension, or typology, merging the believer's life with the events of scriptural history. The essential notion of the type, distinguishing it from the modern idea of the symbol, as Erich Auerbach first observed, is that it relates earlier and later historical events in terms of promise and fulfillment rather than through the linkage of causality. In this way Old Testament events foreshadow New Testament ones that fulfill them, and the whole process is interpreted, as Bercovitch says, "through a sacred design that is prior to, and independent of, the self." Perry Miller had dealt with this subject only in connection with Roger Williams, whom he thought eccentric in his typological interest. Bercovitch implicitly revises Miller by putting typology at the center of the mainstream of Puritan thought.

This subject is not simple, but I think Bercovitch makes it seem excessively thorny by his indulgence in a forbidding technical vocabulary: *exemplum fidei, littera-historia, protevangelium, sola scriptura, auto-machia, microchristus,* soteriology. Although it reflects his grasp, unusual in an Americanist, of the world of Renaissance scholarship, perhaps more courtesy to the reader would have enabled him to find terms more accessible to contemporaries. His taste for Latinisms may distract readers from his ideas.

A crucial one is his distinction between two providential histories—one in which secular events are featured, although they are ultimately controlled by God; the other in which the historical individual, community, and events are located within a sacred scheme of salvation. In his homage to Winthrop as an

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American Nehemiah, Mather, the Puritan biographer, characteristically conflated the two ideas, connecting the governor with "a terrestrial *and* a supernal country." As the representative American, he stands "at once for citizen and saint, state and church, New England and ecclesiastical history, *res Americana* and *res Christi*."

For Bercovitch this rhetorical strategy of Mather's, which makes America a prophetic extension of New England, is important historically: it contributes to our spiritualized "anthropomorphic nationalism" that links up millennial expectations of redemption with a national destiny, as other scholars (for example, Ernest L. Tuveson, not cited here) have demonstrated. The point gains force if comparative analysis can show the absence of this cast of mind in other countries. Bercovitch has to meet the challenge posed by English political religion in the Puritan revolution, which applied Israel's story to England as analogy, precedent, and moral example.

He concedes that John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* "brought spiritual and chronicle biography together in the framework of English history" and so "rendered 'England' a metaphor for the confluence of redemptive and providential history." He goes even further and admits that the *Magnalia* was "an anachronism on the day of its publication," whereas the *Book of Martyrs* became "by royal decree a companion volume to the Bible in every parish church," remaining the national epic for half a century. Yet Bercovitch's book depends upon his belief that Mather's vision "remains one of the most powerful unifying elements of the culture," surviving down through the classic age of American literature and beyond. In provocative footnotes, Bercovitch pursues his theme obliquely to find quarry in Henry Adams, Fitzgerald, Mailer, and Warren. How is this paradox to be explained?

The vision survived whether or not Americans had ever heard of the *Magnalia*, he argues, because they shared Harriet Beecher Stowe's millennial view of American history, first adumbrated in Mather's work as something "both more comprehensive and more privileged than what Foxe meant by national election." This crucial distinction is an elusive one, and Bercovitch defines it finally as the narrow difference between "a temporary conjunction of sainthood and nationality" in the English case and, in the American one, a "fusion" of the two categories in an "unfolding pattern of types and antitypes, itself a prophecy to be fulfilled."

The New England version seems affiliated appropriately to the Bay Colony's polity in which church and state overlapped in the restriction of citizenship to sainthood status. But what is missing is an exploration of how such a vision survived the coming of the Enlightenment in good enough health to flourish again, as he claims it did, in the classic writings of the American Renaissance. Here the limitations of his hermeneutical method become visible. He suggests that Mather's vision survived for several Puritan generations because it was compensatory for a growing sense of psychic uncertainty and political failure, but at the end of his essay Bercovitch concedes that "the changing relations between myth and society in America require a separate study." He falls back upon the explanation that the rhetoric survived out of merit "because it was compelling enough in content and flexible enough in form to invite adaptation."

No doubt it was, but the missing link in this story is the eighteenth century, which included not only the great revivals of the 1740s but also the Jeffersonian agrarian myth of America. For Bercovitch, "the myth of America is the creation of the New England Way." How, then, account for Jefferson's proposal of a national seal picturing on one side the Israelites pursued by a pillar of fire? The alliance between the Calvinist republicans and the rationalist republicans of 1776 cannot be understood by exclusive attention to rhetorical continuities, examined here only in a brief reference to a famous poem of the 1770s. Without the eighteenth century the leap to the nineteenth is even more puzzling.

Like Miller, Bercovitch establishes a resonance between Edwards and Emerson. But whereas Miller saw it in their common spiritualization of nature, Bercovitch characteristically finds it in their way of seeing America as a source of millennial splendor for a regenerate perceiver who transforms himself "in the image of the New World." American

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romantics like George Bancroft and Walt Whitman clearly fit this pattern; often Emerson and occasionally Thoreau do too; but Hawthorne and Melville, despite Bercovitch's brief, ingenious efforts to assimilate their work to the design, are much more characteristically ironic about it. The difference between the European romantics, celebrated by Meyer H. Abrams and Harold Bloom, and those American romantics for whom the millennium was not only the regeneracy of the soul, but also a redemptive prophetic nationalism, is not as pervasive as Bercovitch implies. But one of the values in his bold reversal of the usual claim that it was the Europeans who had a more communal sense of self is his recognition that Emerson's demand for independence was also allied to a denunciation, in American style, of eccentricity and elitism. The Emersonian hero has a national role to play.

The book ends with the elliptical suggestion that the design it has traced from Mather to Whitman through Edwards to Emerson may be, in the Marxist sense, an ideology for "the major middle-class civilization of modern times." It thus points toward a political story of the idea of redemptive history without ever exploring it. Like the Mock Turtle, whose school at the bottom of the sea had a regular course including "Mystery, ancient and modern," Bercovitch dives deeper than he can swim far. Yet the idea persists even in some of our pioneer "realists." I offer him another footnote: De Forest's *Miss Ravenel's Conversion from Secession to Loyalty*, in which Dr. Ravenel compares John Wilkes Booth to Judas, Lincoln to Jesus, and history to a five-act drama beginning with the Christian revelation and having a fifth act in the Civil War. Not surprisingly, the novel's hero, who "like the nation" has "developed and learned his powers," comes from a thinly disguised New Haven where modern editions of the works of Jonathan Edwards are still coming out.

"To be an American," Santayana said, "is of itself almost a moral condition, an education, and a career." Canadian-born, Bercovitch understands the crucial point that American literature is involved not so much with the universal archetypes favored by current critics as it is with the historical myths of our political religions.

Two Hundred Years Is Enough

THE CULTURAL CONTRADICTIONS OF CAPITALISM. *By Daniel Bell. Basic Books. $12.95.*

Reviewed by JOHN THOMPSON

"I believe we are coming to a watershed in Western society," Daniel Bell says in *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*. "We are witnessing the end of the bourgeois idea." Such chiliastic notions are familiar enough, as Bell reminds us. Usually, as with Marx and Nietzsche, the forecasts have also been eager urgings for their fulfillment. But Bell's belief is regretful, and he wishes us to direct this grand diversion of forces so that the best of it, political liberalism, may not be washed away with the bourgeois idea. His respect for our society gives his analysis of our perils a strength such as no Savonarola or Bazarov could command. To the general reader this should be a work of absorbing and even frightening interest. Bell's *End of Ideology* and his studies for the year 2000 reached, directly or indirectly, far beyond the professional audience of sociology. This book should go even further.

What its technical schemes in social science amount to I cannot say; nor, of course, can anyone say what its predictions or its prescriptions for salvation will come to. He has a prescriptive conclusion and, to tell at once what it is, Bell holds out the hope that we may be saved by a spiritual and religious revival. Abruptly again, this seems to me more frightening even than the terrible social problems he shows us we are facing, because it is such a desperate hope and because new religions are not necessarily benign. If some beast is indeed slouching toward Bethlehem, it may be a very rough one. And then, too, there is some unresolved puzzle in his analysis itself that is not the same as the unresolved disjunctions of the three realms of society he describes. (I will try to say what that is later.)

The three realms are the economic, the political, and the cultural. This trisection,

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Bell says, allows us to see the facts better than does any unitary model of society. More important, it allows him to state that the radical disfunction of the West, and most particularly of America, is that these three realms are out of phase with one another. Each suffers from enough internal strains and contradictions, but they are now, he says, working against each other, and that could destroy us.

Bell writes first of culture. This he takes to be "the arena of *expressive symbolism:* those efforts, in painting, poetry, and fiction, or within the religious forms of litany, liturgy, and ritual, which seek to explore and express the meanings of human existence in some imaginative form."

The general reader will perhaps be surprised and pleased to find a social scientist giving culture this primary place, as if to honor it where its claims have been so much ignored. He even says that today "culture has clearly become supreme"; it is "the most dynamic component of our civilization." Well! And the general reader may be pleased also with Bell's wide knowledge of the high arts, of the popular arts, of their practitioners and their critics and their consumers. Doubtless such a reader will be pleased again to see that Bell is well instructed in taste and theory, so much so that he has learned to share our deep unease about this supreme culture, "adversary culture," as Lionel Trilling called it; our disenchantment of sorts with modernism and our disgust for the postmodern.

Bell surveys modernism—an effort not often made with his sweep. It began, he says, as a response to two social changes in the nineteenth century: first, "the disorientation of the sense of space and time, derived from the new awareness of motion and speed, light, and sound that came from the revolution in communication and transport" and, second, a crisis in self-consciousness that arose from "the loss of religious certitude, of belief in an afterlife, in heaven or hell, and from the new consciousness of an immutable boundary beyond life and the nothingness of death." Modernism was "the self-willed effort of a style and sensibility to remain in the forefront of 'advancing consciousness.' " Modernism was antibourgeois, it cultivated the self against society, and it triumphed; its great years were 1890-1930. Bell's survey necessarily

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omits much and simplifies a lot. For all his sympathy, his presentation of modernism does not reflect the magnificence of that great outburst of energy, intelligence, talent, and deep human spirit in Baudelaire, Proust, Mann, Joyce, Yeats, Eliot, Kafka, Stravinsky, Bartók, Berg, Cézanne, Picasso, Renoir, Braque . . . names upon names. Surely there had been nothing like it since the Renaissance. But perhaps we are all somewhat soured now, in our aftertaste, by the thought that modernism has a lot to answer for—if it must answer for its successors, our postmodernist artists, all warmed-over messes of instant gratification and nihilism. Bell is not always clear about this, but it seems in general that the great ones do have to accept this responsibility. Not the Great War, not the depression, not Stalin, but the old avant garde made our world. In this area lurks what I think is Bell's central confusion, but first let me give a glimpse of his other realms.

The task of the polity is to assure us of justice, security, and fair exchange. Our polity is unstable because the system has become overcharged with responsibilities that had before been private. Here Bell's exposition again may not present general news, but many readers will surely find his categories and his facts and figures renewing all those shocks we have become used to in the papers and in the streets. Vast shifts in population, in demography, in social style—these may be too much for our political contraption. And then, for all we know, we may be suffering our imperial climacteric, too.

Although the political realm has had to absorb more and more of the functions of the economy, the techno-economic order—Post-Industrial in Bell's term—still has to do its basic task of organizing production and allocating goods and services. Bell spends little time examining or even presenting this third of his realms. And it is here that, it seems to me, his analysis is muddled or contradictory, I cannot say which.

The techno-economic order, he states, is all functional rationality and economizing: efficiency, least cost, greatest return, maximization, optimization, costs and benefits. "There is a simple measure of value, namely utility. And there is a simple principle of change, namely the ability to substitute products or processes because they are more efficient and yield higher return at lesser cost, the principle of productivity." Such is capitalist economy.

This realm is in profound disjunction with the culture. The culture is in all ways its opposite: irrational, prodigal, promiscuous, anti-intellectual, craving sensation, instinctive, unrestrained, given to sex and violence—literally demonic. And culture is the seducer, destroying the efficiency and functional rationality of the economy. Yet Bell also says it was either "in part" or entirely, "singularly," the free market itself, the mechanism of the bourgeois economy, that destroyed the Protestant ethic and the unspoken assumptions that guided American life. It did this by expansion of credit, by installment and charge accounts, by leading the consumer to live happily in debt. Is modernism or postmodernism then necessary to his description of the end of the bourgeois idea?

And further, is this textbook capitalism really our economy, rational and functional? Bell mentions the "repulsive" squandering of resources by Western society, needless packaging, vulgar display. Our automobiles, which he calls "large and heavy," are themselves extravagant wrappings covering what used to be rational machines. Is not our industrial complex, with its gigantic fantasies of finance, towers of debt, huge briberies, and plain theft, enough to keep us in hot water without Andy Warhol?

It always seems a bit impudent for a reviewer to challenge in a few hundred words the hundreds of pages of painful thought that are the writer's work. Still with a few hundred words more I would even like to say that Bell is wrong because the author of *Work and Its Discontents* has largely forgotten what Freud said about culture in *Civilization and Its Discontents*.

But I have not begun to describe all that Daniel Bell has achieved here. Anyone who cares to think about what is happening in America will want to have this book. I must add that, for all his many signposts of parts, chapters, headings, and subheadings, the author has left us a rough and meandering trail, embedded with parentheses, dashes, italics, and footnote potholes; yet one hikes through.

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Ladies of the Desk

LITERARY WOMEN. *By Ellen Moers. Doubleday. $10.*

Reviewed by RENEE WINEGARTEN

"It will never do. We are overrun. Women carry all before them. . . . Does it never strike these delightful creatures that their little fingers were made to be kissed not to be inked?" It was in this dreadfully arch manner that the author of an article entitled "A Gentle Hint to Writing-Women," published in 1850, could consider the novels of Charlotte Brontë, Elizabeth Gaskell, and others whom he praised for their shrewd and delicate observations of life. And he added, sourly, "*My* idea of a perfect woman is one who can write but won't." Still, waggishness was evidently a cover for insecurity: the poor fellow did indeed know that the battle against the feminine invasion of literature was already lost. Even by the middle of the eighteenth century, greater leisure together with a shift in sensibility had helped to increase the number of women readers and the number of those who catered to them, including far more women writers than is commonly realized.

A few years before the French Revolution, Condorcet had urged equal rights for women, a program much discussed in the early stages of that mighty storm. By the 1830s, the schismatic Saint-Simonists, led by Enfantin, were challenging a masculine-oriented religion in their odd quest for a mother-messiah—a challenge that has its serious side and has yet to be met. By the end of the nineteenth century, Henry James could declare that "women are turned more and more to looking at life as men look at it and to getting from it what men get."

The history of literature from the feminine point of view remains to be written and, thanks to Ellen Moers's fascinating study, *Literary Women,* it no longer seems an entirely farfetched or depressing enterprise. Her book, however, does not set out to be such an enterprise. What Ellen Moers offers is a collection of essays, meditations on themes (such as

RENEE WINEGARTEN, essayist and literary critic, is the author of *French Lyric Poetry in the Age of Malherbe* and *Writers and Revolution.*

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work, money, private fears and obsessions, sexuality, social justice, the heroic) in French, English, and American literature written by women, from the mid-eighteenth century to the present day.

Few methods are without their disadvantages. The snag in this one is that the reader is obliged to jump from one period to another, or to go back to a writer already partly discussed elsewhere. (And here I utter a word of complaint about the "original" arrangement of the notes and references, which adds to, and does not always reward, the tenacious reader's labor.) The great advantage of Ellen Moers's method, on the other hand, lies in her selection and projection of aspects that appear common to writings by women—and, indeed, to the specifically female experience. Her treatment of these themes is marred by neither self-righteous militancy nor undue solemnity. There is good fun in her neat substitution of "woman" for "man" in epigraphs chosen from Wordsworth (a poet is "a woman speaking to women") and Carlyle, who (sweet is revenge) is listed under his long-suffering wife's name.

Scarcely a page in this delightful study is without penetrating insights. Among these is the suggestion that Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* is a "birth myth," inspired by its author's experience of pregnancy as a very young unmarried girl and by her private terror at being a "bearer of death" to her mother, Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, as well as to her own ill-fated progeny. Equally striking is the notion that for spinsters among the Victorian poets, like Christina Rossetti, the rough-and-tumble with brothers in the nursery provided intimations of the erotic, "the *only* heterosexual world" they could physically explore. Professor Moers notes, too, the ambivalence of the word "spontaneity" when applied as a term of praise to novels or poems by women, since it implies a lack of discipline. In short, here is a map of many and varied riches.

One of the author's chief gifts lies in her ability to make unexpected connections. She is rather kind about the educational role and the tedious moralizing novels of Napoleon's spy, Mme de Genlis—"that insufferable bluestocking . . . who unfortunately escaped the guillotine," opined one exasperated (masculine) authority; but Ellen Moers suggests that Jane Austen, who knew the Frenchwoman's work, in *Emma* satirized the cautionary tale in the Genlis manner and turned it inside out. Elsewhere Professor Moers brilliantly discusses how George Eliot in *Adam Bede* turns *Emma* inside out, by exploring an area that Jane Austen chose not to examine—the milieu of Harriet Smith's suitor, the farmer Robert Martin.

Jane Austen leaves Harriet at Robert Martin's gate: "If Jane Austen let the reader go up that gravel path, and threw open the farmhouse door, we would find within, I imagine, the wonderful interior of Hall Farm, where Adam Bede goes to court Hetty Sorel. . . . What George Eliot found in Jane Austen was a garden to break out of. . . ." Following the theory that art largely derives from art, Ellen Moers is surely right in stressing the importance of works by women predecessors for women authors, timid and anxious to corroborate their own experiences. Yet she does not overlook the vital part played by men writers capable of feminine empathy, like Samuel Richardson and Jean Jacques Rousseau, in producing novels that were particularly influential and attractive to female readers.

The fantasy of the woman of genius who dares to lead an independent life and suffers even while lesser mortals bow in adoration—the myth imposed by Mme de Staël's bizarre novel *Corinne*—doubtless owes much to an early feminine exemplar: the inspired prophetess or sibyl of the ancient world. It was a fantasy that haunted the imagination of later nineteenth-century women writers. Probably one good reason why they often depicted their gifted heroines as musicians (after Corinne with her lyre) rather than actresses was the dubious moral character of the actresses of the day—even the greatest of them, like Rachel, who made the admiring Charlotte Brontë "shudder to the marrow of [her] bones." As Heinrich Heine knew to his cost, the distinction between the lesser Parisian actresses and prostitutes was far from clear. More could be made, perhaps, of the social distinction between the highly respectable English and American literary women, from Charlotte Brontë to Margaret Fuller, who were fascinated by French goings-on, and the

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bolder French *femmes de lettres* like Hortense Allart, Marie d'Agoult ("Daniel Stern"), Louise Colet—to say nothing of George Sand—who among them totted up a sizable number of eminent literary lovers.

Ellen Moers, while noting some of George Sand's literary shortcomings, pays her the compliment of taking her and her wide-ranging work seriously, and gives some idea of her large imaginative gifts, her centrality, her immense radiance and radiation. This is most refreshing in a work of general interest. It is George Sand rather than Mme de Staël who is the professional writer par excellence. Mme de Staël, the daughter and sole heiress of a wealthy banker and minister, did not need the money, whereas George Sand made no secret of writing for filthy lucre. The theme of money earned, seen as a token and proof of independence, is a particularly feminine one in Ellen Moers's view, although it might apply to all those, regardless of sex, who suffered from excessive parental authority.

Professor Moers has invented the word "heroinism" to define literary feminism (as distinct from feminism proper), or "the feminine of the heroic principle." I must admit that I find it ugly and would be inclined to resist the addition of any further "isms" to the language, unless absolutely unavoidable. The inventor herself feels unhappy about her creation, since she disarmingly owns that "There came a time . . . when I grew as sick of the word heroinism as the reader is about to become. . . ." Why not keep to a paraphrase which, though longer, remains clear and euphonious? Along with Professor Moers's coinage of "heroinism," her chapters on particular metaphors (the hard kernels, birds, cats) and particular landscapes (banks, hollows, clefts) in writings by women, though never less than interesting, seem to me questionable.

Large claims are made for the "major women writers" who are discussed. Fanny Burney is called the "first major woman novelist," but that title, I suppose, might reasonably be claimed for Mme de La Fayette, whose novel, *La Princesse de Clèves* (much to the irritation of at least one leading modern French writer and notorious antifeminist), has stood since the seventeenth century as a model of the genre in France. Ellen Moers sees the nineteenth century as the "epic age" of literature by women, and the early twentieth century, with Virginia Woolf, Colette, Gertrude Stein, and Willa Cather, as its "peak." She tends to take the merits of all her giantesses largely for granted, and to assume that they are widely read. Morever, she proposes that in this period "the written word in its most memorable form" is the work of women.

All this appears to me to beg some very important and disagreeable questions. While Jane Austen, Emily Brontë, and George Eliot are generally recognized either as forming part of some great tradition or as unique literary talents, the same cannot quite be said even of Elizabeth Barrett Browning or of George Sand. Who reads *Aurora Leigh* or *Consuelo* for pleasure today? How far can George Sand the novelist stand comparison as an artist with the major figures she affected so deeply, like Turgenev or Dostoevsky or Henry James? The literary case has yet to be established. George Sand paid a high price in purely literary terms (and knew it) for writing often in haste and to self-indulgent excess under the pressure of financial needs and obligations. As Christopher Ricks has recently pointed out, George Eliot herself had to pay in her work for her self-doubt, late development, and private need to counterbalance in moral severity her equivocal status as the companion of G. H. Lewes.

Besides, where Ellen Moers's "peak" is concerned, how do her great four—Woolf, Colette, Stein, and Cather—stand when placed on the literary scales with, say, Proust, Joyce, or Thomas Mann, in terms of grandeur of conception in the creation of a world and sustained power of execution? The strictly literary question may be unfashionable, but ultimately it will have to be faced. There are many reasons why the answer would be unfavorable to Virginia Woolf, for instance (heretical as this view may seem in the light of today's cult), or Gertrude Stein, even in their roles as innovators. Indeed, some of the historical reasons are to be found summed up by Mrs. Gaskell in her life of Charlotte Brontë and tellingly illustrated throughout Ellen Moers's book.

The very term "women writers" ("*femmes*

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auteurs") disturbed and offended many nineteenth-century ladies who took up the pen. For the most part, they protested against being included in any such category. Often mediocre feminists from the active or militant standpoint, they were nonetheless furious at any hint of condescension. What they wanted more than anything, we may suspect, was to be recognized simply as writers, with as much natural justification for producing their works as members of the opposite sex. They wanted to be treated as full human beings rather than as women. Since liberty is indivisible, this partly accounts for their radical tone or their courageous commitment in seeking human status for slaves, servants, prostitutes, peasants, or factory workers. In one sense, therefore, to single out female writers or feminine themes and preoccupations may be regarded as a retrograde step rather than the advance some may think it is.

Yet even when this literary query has been raised, there is no denying that a great deal would be lost in the way of enlarged sensibility by failing to take into account such themes and preoccupations. Here, Ellen Moers has proved her point admirably. Her book is a witty, provocative, stimulating, and entertaining "celebration of the great women who have spoken for us all" (men included?). A celebration cannot be expected to be ruthless. *Literary Women* deserves its place on the shelf alongside such notable recent contributions as Elizabeth Hardwick's *Seduction and Betrayal* and Patricia Beer's *Reader, I Married Him.*

Two-Rung Ladder

A Sense of the Cosmos: The Encounter of Modern Science and Ancient Truth. *By Jacob Needleman. Doubleday. $7.95.*

Reviewed by John Woodcock

Jacob Needleman's subject in *A Sense of the Cosmos* is the history and modern consequences of Western culture's break with the "symbolic vision" of traditional religious views. Needleman begins by describing our time as deeply troubled, paranoid, on the verge of cultural breakdown. He then goes back half a millennium to describe the lost ideal he feels modern civilization must reclaim in order to save itself: the static and hierarchical world of medieval Christianity, with man at the center of the universe, a microcosm symbolically embodying all its aspects.

Needleman's basic complaint about modern Western culture is that there is no unifying system of human-centered values. Quoting from the classic texts of the alchemical, Sufi, and other esoteric traditions, and from the commentary of such moderns as P. D. Ouspensky, Needleman argues that in the prescientific religious traditions there was a hierarchy and a metaphysics that served to harmonize conflicts and to humanize knowledge, and at the same time provided a framework of values within which men could shape their aspirations. In our own relativistic and "pragmatic" culture, we seek knowledge not for its own sake, but in order to gain control over nature. As a result, man has become egoistic and alienated from the world around him. Scientific discoveries are frightening in their indifference to the scale of human life, and literature is weakly sentimental. The Church has lost its vision; psychology, its replacement, never had one.

Needleman links the gradual weakening of symbolic vision to certain developments in Western science and medicine. One of the most important of these is the displacement of man from the center of the universe by Copernican heliocentric cosmology. In the history of medicine, Copernicus's contemporary, Andreas Vesalius, draws Needleman's criticism for first describing human anatomy as if the body were a machine rather than a sacred organism, the microcosm of creation. In the philosophy of Descartes, too, Needleman senses the breakdown of an ideal whole into mechanical parts, as thought and the mind were set apart from the body and the rest of the world.

Newton, surprisingly, turns out to be an ally, in spite of his view of the universe as giant clockwork. Needleman's interest in holistic vision leads him to praise Newton for

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revolutionizing the concept of knowledge. By insisting that theories about the nature of the universe be tested experimentally, Newton mixed the empirical with the theoretical, bringing the body and the five senses into an area of knowledge that had long been dominated by the abstract constructions of scholastic theologians. Science after Newton, however, soon neglected the principles of his revolution, moving away from the ancient truths about the cosmos as it rejected the metaphysics and the "inner sensations" by which they were supported.

For a brief moment, with Einstein and relativity, modern science almost redeemed itself in Needleman's eyes. But physics soon cleared itself of potentially entangling alliances with metaphysics and thus lost the quality that interested Needleman—"the power to bring men closer to the search for a new structure of mind." Biology, too, he feels, has turned away from its spiritual potential by deliberately avoiding the area of reciprocity between man and organic nature, between the observer and the observed.

A Sense of the Cosmos, then, conveys a particularly gloomy picture of modern life, and Needleman does not offer much hope. Mankind, he says, now stands at a crisis point "between two dreams." The first is the failing dream of the conquest of nature through science. The second is the recently delineated dream of "inner progress," the conquest of the self in order to "transform those moral and psychological flaws which have made [our] use of scientific discoveries so destructive." For Needleman, however, to pursue this second dream is only to give up one delusion for another—even when the road to inner progress brings us in contact with non-Western esoteric traditions. He bases this paradoxical assertion on his belief that a *pragmatic* approach to traditional sacred ideas will yield only a "distorted" knowledge that will have misleading and even dangerous effects on its possessors.

Thus, Needleman sees no hope in our quick therapies of self-improvement, or in other borrowing from non-Western traditions, such as the environmentalists' use of Taoist and American Indian imagery. He would also disagree with Robert Ornstein and others who have urged the integration of Eastern wisdom

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and Western psychology for a fuller understanding of human behavior. The challenge for modern man, says Needleman—and the only way of escape from his present bleak situation—is to remain passively *between* the two dreams of progress, "in front of the unknown," long enough "to be able to receive the truth, both about nature and his own possible role in the universal order."

The problem with such a goal is that it is idealistic to the point of being self-defeating. It is hard enough—though certainly possible—for an individual to cultivate the absolute state of wise passivity Needleman recommends. But to expect Western culture as a whole thus to reverse its direction seems to commit one to living with dreams and perennial censure of things as they are.

Thus Needleman's idealism would seem to be responsible for his pessimism. Needleman says that the universe either is or should be seen as—the distinction is not clear—purposefully ordered for the benefit of the human race. With this as a beginning, and with no rationalization of evil such as Christianity's doctrine of Original Sin, he is not able to discuss current personal or cultural difficulties except in terms of failure. He holds that there *is* such a thing as "the truth," absolute knowledge about oneself and the universe, and that there is only one path to that knowledge. It is not surprising that when he looks around him he sees little but degraded (or "distorted," or "everyday") forms of religion, science, ideas, symbols, understanding, and experience.

There is a Sufi parable in which a dervish of the scholastic school rows out from a stream bank to correct the chanting of another dervish living alone on an island. Rowing back, satisfied with having improved both the other and himself by this instruction, the scholastic hears a voice and looks up. The hermit is running toward him across the water, apologizing for having forgotten the orthodox procedure so soon, and asking to be corrected again. Needleman's book would seem to be sympathetic with the Sufi tradition's emphasis on the limits of everyday practical and professional knowledge; but to its detriment it lacks that same tradition's mistrust of absolutes and rigid doctrine.

Needleman's advice, in its most accessible form, is that we should integrate knowledge of ourselves with our knowledge of the universe. In Ouspensky's words: "In striving towards a knowledge of the universe, man should begin with the study of himself and with the realization of the fundamental laws within him." This is a praiseworthy goal, at least in such general form. Yet to insist that there is only one path to such knowledge, a path that lies in remote, exotic traditions, would seem to work against its realization. It is ironic that a writer so concerned with the anxiety of modern man should himself exacerbate matters by first telling us how high we must climb, and then giving us a ladder with only a top and a bottom rung.

Lost in Translation

FIFTY SOVIET POETS. *Compiled by Vladimir Ognev and Dorian Rottenberg. Progress Publishers, Moscow. Distributed by Imported Publications, Inc. $2.75.*

Reviewed by JONATHAN BRENT

Fifty Soviet Poets, with parallel Russian-English texts, is assuredly one of the more curious of all the special export editions brought out by the Soviet Union. It was published originally in 1969 but was almost unavailable in this country for lack of distribution. *Fifty Soviet Poets* was reissued in 1974, and now, thanks to Imported Publications, can be found in general bookstores throughout the country. In some ways, this book reflects only the state of Soviet knowledge of the West as it existed in 1969, and its real interest lies not so much in the individual poems as in the way these poems and translations are presented to the American people.

At first all we can see behind this book is the understandable wish to interest average American readers, those who may not be specialists in Russian literature and language, in modern Soviet poetry. The English translations are intended, the editor tells us, to give us the substance of the verse, while the accompanying Russian text is provided for background.

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Setting the Russian against the English text was bold. Since the Russians would never risk embarrassment at the hands of the American public, especially in so delicate a venture as cultural exchange, we can assume that they thought highly of their translations—highly enough to reproduce them unamended in 1974—and offered the parallel Russian text, not simply as background or possible correction but boastfully as a measure of their ability to translate. It is fascinating to think of all the possibilities this book mutely suggests: the Soviet attitude toward the American public, toward poetry, toward the English language, the Soviet self-image. One can only feel that the same daring quality of mind that launched Sputnik is essentially responsible for producing this book—which, like some curious sensing device, is destined to gather no soil on Venus, but only dust on American bookshelves. The old saw about translations here gets a modern accompaniment: it is easier to put a man on the moon than to put Pasternak into English.

A country relatively so young as the Soviet Union would naturally boast and be happy about its strength, its abilities, its will to overcome and survive all difficulties. Such a habit of thought and feeling, though, must necessarily tell on its cultural life. For the Soviets, poetry does not bring with it "the soul and all its maladies." On the contrary, "poetry means hope. And when hope has a solid, tangible basis, and the people's confidence in themselves is bolstered . . . then a precious spark of mutual understanding between poet and reader is kindled. In poetry the reader will find support for his faith in such human virtues as dignity, fortitude and loyalty." So says the editor, Vladimir Ognev, in the preface to this volume. Can the people fostering this belief be the same that produced Dostoevsky, Gogol, Tolstoy? The question itself is amazing, for how could they be different? The poets in this anthology, however, are labeled "Soviet," not "Russian," and so is their poetry. Mr. Ognev and those he speaks for, then, must intend to distinguish a particularly Soviet quality and point of view from what might have been taken more generally as Russian. He implies a distinction between the Russian people, with their roots and

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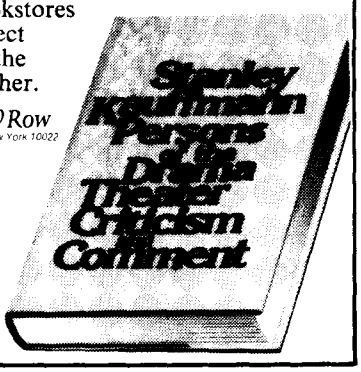

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memories, and the Soviet people, with their future hope and confidence.

No doubt we Americans were expected to discover and approve the image of progressive Soviet man as we read through the pages of the anthology. Toward this end, only poetry written within ten years of 1969 was printed. Poets like Alexander Prokofiev promote the Soviet image in their hymns to Soviet power and prosperity. In his poem "Their Return," Prokofiev declares that his homeland is known throughout the world for its "Song,/ boldness,/and bravado." But against this song, boldness, and bravado comes Anna Akhmatova's plaintive, tragic recognition in her poem "*This Russian Soil*":

> It's the mud on our shoes, it is rubble,
> It's the sand on our teeth, it is slush,
> It's the pure, taintless dust that we crumble,
> That we pound, that we mix, that we crush.

Akhmatova's poem strikes a discordant tone. The new Soviet man, we feel, has usurped, or sought to usurp, the Russian soul with all its troubles, uncertainties, acceptances.

Because of the ten-year limitation, many of the great modern Russian poets are excluded from this anthology: Mandelstam, Tsvetayeva, Mayakovsky. Other more recent but politically controversial poets are also absent: Daniel, Brodsky, Gorbanyevskaya. Although Pasternak, Akhmatova, and Zabolotsky are meagerly represented among the more contemporary poets, the table of contents appears sadly deficient, causing the publishing deadline to seem needlessly arbitrary and severe. It makes impossible any sense of continuity or development, which even the average American reader with enough incentive to purchase the book would have enjoyed. We would have liked to see connections and roots, but the policy that has restricted them in the Soviet image has here denied them to us as well.

The poetry, furthermore, varies considerably in quality. Some is excellent, some inferior; no purely aesthetic standard was adhered to in selecting it. The choice seems to have been as arbitrary as the ten-year deadline. Order is achieved only in the alphabetical sequence of the poets' names. In the case of Pasternak this has the bizarrely suggestive effect of placing him between Narovchatov, whom the brief biography describes as "an essentially Russian poet," and Prokofiev, who as former head of the Leningrad Writer's Union was, to a certain extent, responsible for bringing Josef Brodsky to trial in 1964. Dullness on the one hand, and official Soviet criticism on the other, were fated to catch Pasternak ever between them.

It is easy to pick out those poems conforming to Social Realist ideology and those inspired by genuine sentiment or passion. It is easy because, as with all poetry whose motive is external to the poet's own experience or response to life, the products of Social Realism are almost uniformly flat and one-sided, both in tone and in thought. Poems such as Kugultinov's "O Motherland" and Narovchatov's "For Soviet Power" are interesting mainly for the unembarrassed spirit in which they celebrate this narrow doctrine. Through these poems the world appears about as interesting as a shiny new brick wall. On the other hand, Akhmatova's "This Russian Soil" and Chikovani's "Haymaking," while also treating the poet's relation to his homeland, achieve through complexity of feeling a complexity of structure and viewpoint. The comparison between these poets, who all deal in one way or another with similar subjects, substantiates the old truth that the fineness of a poet's apprehension of thought and feeling, and the fineness of his vision of objects and institutions, cannot be isolated from each other. That kind of isolation strikes one as the real danger of Social Realism, and this volume abundantly shows us its practical effects.

I hesitate to cite the English translations of these poems, not for fear that they may not illustrate my point, but because the translations in this anthology pose a special problem that I wish to take up as a distinct subject. The Russians are by no means novices in the art of translation. The poems for this anthology were in fact chosen, as Mr. Ognev remarks, for their translatability. And because the translations were not put into literal prose, but were executed as poems in their own right, they call attention to themselves. Not merely our approval but our admiration was hoped for.

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These translations, however, do practically everything except give even a modest account of the poems facing them in Russian. The literal opposition betokens a virtual one between the poets with their language and the translators with theirs. An inveterate provincialism both in diction and imagination mars even the best efforts of these translators. In many cases the translations are simply sloppy and imprecise. For instance, "и щупает Лоллобриджид," in Voznesensky's "Antiworlds" is rendered by Dorian Rottenberg as "lolls in the arms of Aphrodite." The line actually reads "is feeling Lollobrigida." Mr. Rottenberg changes the sense of "щупает," and for some reason best known to himself turns Gina Lollobrigida into Aphrodite. Perhaps he conjectured that the literate, but perverse, modern American mind must give the same affectionate regard to the flesh-bound Hollywood sexpot as to the mythical Greek goddess. Creating "lolls in the arms of" out of "feels" in the possible result of an unfamiliarity with English usage, but creating Aphrodite out of Lollobrigida is sheer magic. Why is this magic screen thrown up, when the unexpurgated Russian text is duly placed beside it for all who can read it?

Such curiosities are supplemented with strange deviations from modern English usage. The title to Nikolai Aseyev's poem is a case in point: "There Are Some Folk Who Money Covet." The original poem does not have so quaint a title. The syntax and vocabulary are just plain wrong. The translators consistently use words like "mite" for "child," "folk" for "people," contractions such as "o'er" for "over," "'tis" for "it is," and phrases such as "sally forth" for "go out." They have consciously sought out the same poetic diction that English and American poets rejected about eighty years ago. This can hardly be the result of a lack of contact with modern American and English poetry. Brodsky has translated T. S. Eliot, and we know that the long tradition of translating in Leningrad has recently culminated in Russian editions of Allen Ginsberg and Robert Frost.

Avril Pyman's translation of "Родине," by by Pariur Sevak, shows us what specific effects the Soviet translators hoped for in using these conventions. No comparable artificial language appears in the originals.

O Motherland!
For thirty years I have been striving after
perfection in Thy tongue, but cannot speak
to Thee without mistakes. . . .
Again, again,
Emotion makes me lose the thread and stammer.

This poem is a hymn of praise, to be sure, but as anyone can tell from a cursory glance at just this first stanza, Mr. Pyman has translated praise and love into posturing.

There is no justification in the Russian text for exchanging "you" and "your" for "Thee" and "Thy." There is equally no justification for capitalizing "Motherland." This way of dealing with the original text exemplifies the general fault of all the translations. Mr. Pyman expresses in another form the basic trait of Soviet self-confidence: wherever possible he exaggerates, puts feelings, beliefs, intentions, as well as initial letters, in capitals. Everything is idealized and purged of qualification. The artificial diction is perfectly suited to his end.

Only in this context does Mr. Pyman's translation become intelligible. "For thirty years I have been striving after / perfection in Thy tongue" is his handling of a line that could be rendered simply "For thirty years I have been studying your tongue." The Russian verb "been studying" becomes "striving after perfection." Mr. Sevak, the poet, intends this as a shy declaration of abiding love. Mr. Pyman makes it absurdly Promethean; he, not the poet, is the one looking for perfection. Such distortions can occur only when

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perceptions become subordinated to a policy. In this case the policy is to express in ideal language the ideal feelings of an ideal poet for his ideal homeland. The result, however, is far from an ideal translation.

The translations in this anthology are most conspicuously marked by the failure to achieve, or even approximate, a complexity comparable to that of the originals. When complexity occurs in the original, the translators seem not to notice it. The cause, I believe, is partly intention and partly perception. When Mr. Rottenberg promotes Lollobrigida to Aphrodite, he idealizes, and consequently fails to discriminate, the poet's purpose.

Perception and intention work together. Defects in one multiply defects in the other. The moral that extremism and blindness go hand in hand could not be emphasized better than by the following translation, in which the translator's extreme idealization has led to an equally extreme misconstruction of the poet's (Chikovani's) thoughts and feelings.

Швырни пахучей горстью тута,
глазами темными маня.
С табой не будет мне уюта.
Ты как восстание,
как смута.
Ты моя сладкая минута
и вечность горкая моя.

A fairly literal translation of the stanza would read:

> Hurl your sweet odors in handfuls around,
> beckoning with dark eyes.
> With you I will have no rest.
> You are rebellion,
> mutiny.
> You are my sweet minute,
> my bitter eternity.

Mr. Zellicoff puts it:

> Come, Life, to me—new deeds I'll dare,
> Your harvest rich around me spread,
> Your dreams and sorrows let me share
> As on your breast I rest my head.

Needless to say, Mr. Zellicoff has taken wholesale liberties with the text. Because he idealizes it so completely, it cannot possibly reflect the interesting concrete qualities of the poet's relation to nature. The daring in Mr. Zellicoff's first line is all his own.

The Russian translators are out of touch not so much with the facts of modern English usage, as with the sense of it. They have overestimated their power to translate, not because they cannot translate but because they thought they knew what Americans listened for and expected, when in reality they did not. Their "song, boldness, and bravado" led them astray.

Assuredly, too much could be made of the curious qualities of these translations, and certainly one would not wish to base generalizations on Soviet culture, or "mind," exclusively on them. In an interesting way, though, the faults of the translations reflect the worst aesthetic and moral features both of the poems themselves and of the doctrine that Mr. Ognev briefly outlines in his introduction. An intimate alliance is evident in the translations, the theory, and the poems. And the official Soviet ideal, as it appears still to be conceived, can, I believe, be defined by the characteristics and limitations that are the quintessential characteristics and limitations of these translations.

Moral idealization, and the lack of aesthetic perception that it entails, are symptoms of provincialism. Ossip Mandelstam warned against it in 1937 when he described Acmeism as "a homesickness for world culture." This homesickness has turned into studied indifference or, perhaps, simple ignorance. The new Soviet self-image is thus remarkably provincial. The narrow habit of mind it fosters seems to belie the dialectical philosophy of history, which the Soviet government prizes as its foundation. Such provincialism is not simply an index of social, economic, or political conditions; it represents a phase of culture that, as Matthew Arnold so long ago observed, cannot be bought or mechanized, but waits upon an inward operation of the mind.

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The Reader Replies

THE READER REPLIES *carries miscellaneous comments by readers and authors on various articles that have appeared in the magazine. All communications should be addressed to: Editor,* THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR, *1811 Q Street, N. W., Washington, D. C. 20009. Because of space limitations we cannot guarantee to print all letters received.*

—EDITOR

Lords of Life, Kings in Exile

In his recent article "Lords of Life, Kings in Exile: Identity and Sexuality in D. H. Lawrence" (Winter 1975-76), Professor Robert Langbaum argues that Lawrence is "remarkably Wordsworthian." Surprisingly, Langbaum seems not to have read—at any rate, he does not mention—"Love Was Once a Little Boy," an essay by Lawrence that could not accurately be characterized as anything but anti-Wordsworthian. The following short passage is a fair sample of Lawrence's splenetic tirade against Wordsworth:

> "I, William, am also a yellow primrose blossoming on a bank." This, we must assert, is an impertinence on William's part. He ousts the primrose from its own individuality. He doesn't allow it to call its soul its own. It must be identical with his soul. Because, of course, by begging the question, there is but One Soul in the universe.
>
> This is bunk. A primrose has its own peculiar primrosy identity, and all the oversouling in the world won't melt it into a Williamish oneness. (*The Later D. H. Lawrence*, edited by William York Tindall, Knopf, 1952)

By failing to take account of contrary evidence, Professor Langbaum has seriously damaged the credibility of much of his argument. For example, he claims that "morality for Lawrence and Wordsworth means giving your allegiance to experience rather than theory." According to Lawrence, the chief difficulty with Wordsworth was precisely too much theory.

DAVID R. EWBANK
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MR. LANGBAUM replies: I appreciate Mr. Ewbank's interest in my article on Lawrence. Yes, I have read Lawrence's attack on Wordsworth's *Peter Bell*, and take it into account in the following sentence: "Lawrence revitalizes Wordsworth's sense of organic identity by rejecting those Wordsworthian visual transformations that had come to seem mere idealizing impositions of meaning upon the natural object" (p. 813).

When Wordsworth's poetry fails, he is left merely idealizing; and even his admirers deplore these lapses. But when Lawrence and Wordsworth theorize—and Lawrence theorizes more than Wordsworth—their theory is that experience is more valid than theory. Lawrence's emphasis on organic connection with nature is of course pure Wordsworth, as Mr. Ewbank will understand quickly enough when he finds time to reread "Tintern Abbey," "Resolution and Independence," and *The Prelude*.

Liberation Through Limitation

It was with a bemused sense of *déjà vu* that we encountered Robert K. Wallace's cliché-riddled article, "One Woman's Career: Liberation Through Limitation" (Summer 1976). On a shaky framework of moral rectitude Mr. Wallace erects a structure for the continued oppression of women. In fact, Rosina Lhevinne's life reflects the traditional values of woman subordinate to man and offers nothing new to the contemporary woman in search of alternatives. The pernicious effect of Mr. Wallace's article is to present her renunciation of a career as a concert pianist as a virtuous and fulfilling *modus vivendi*. Rosina Lhevinne is clearly an exceptional woman, but she did *not* make exceptional choices in her life, opting instead for the socially sanctioned roles of wife and mother with a career annexed to her later years. Her example illustrates not the fulfillment of promise, but why so few women of genius have ever managed to distinguish themselves through dedication to the cultivation

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and display of their own brilliance. Marriage truncated her development as a pianist of first magnitude, for she became in private the force behind her husband's successful career as a pianist and in public his shadow, refusing personal praise in order to redirect attention to his persona.

The assumptions underpinning Mr. Wallace's interpretation of her life must be unmasked. Based on Rosina Lhevinne's example, two choices confront a woman: a "successful" marriage or a "solo" career. That Rosina Lhevinne failed to follow either Essipova or Carreño, two accomplished female predecessors of the concert circuit, appears to have ensued from her fear that divorce would result if she did not devote herself to her husband. The choice which Rosina Lhevinne made in 1898 achieves in Mr. Wallace's simpleminded historical portrait the pristine quality of an "eternal truth." Implicit in her sacrifice and in the sacrifices of those who would emulate her is the notion that a man, faced with no similar limitation, will move freely in the world. Marriage poses no dilemma; to eclipse one's wife is only fitting and proper.

Women are emerging from Dark Ages of shadowlike existence to seek a new consciousness of themselves and of their place in the world, and their struggle shuns such fatuous arguments in favor of traditional womanhood as we find in Mr. Wallace's article. What, then, are the goals of the women's movement whose aims Mr. Wallace has mischaracterized as "the full blossoming of the inviolate self"? Far broader than his trivial self-indulgent view implies, the goals of the women's movement are to alter not only personal relationships but also political, economic, social, and intellectual structures.

Rosina Lhevinne is so clearly an exceptional woman—in class, in genius, in historical moment, and in geographical place that she offers no model at all for women who are neither upper class nor musically gifted. Seventy-eight years ago she accepted the traditional assumption which did not accord her the freedom to develop her rare musical abilities without jeopardizing her marriage. When we see the by-products of her immense talent—Van Cliburn, her husband Josef, and others—we do wonder what we lost. Can men distinguish themselves only at the expense of women, and why should this be so? The time has come when women must develop their talents and receive their due unhampered by their particular relationships with men. We are waiting for articles presenting the exceptional women who have the strength to carry through their personal visions. We desire a society which will not consider this reprehensible but right, a society where a woman's sacrifice is not the necessary precondition for her survival. Until that revolutionary change occurs, we cannot allow Mr. Wallace's variety of retrograde reasoning to undermine our efforts.

FRAN ANDERSON
ANIK GENTRY
PAT HILDEN
University of California
Davis, California

MR. WALLACE replies: Though it is a shock, nay, a near provocation, for a solitary male to be publically accosted in strident simultaneity by three impassioned females, I'll repress the urge to respond in kind. Whether the aroused troika sincerely or willfully misunderstood what my essay said, I'll assume the former and attempt a few clarifications.

As both title and contents make clear, the purpose of the essay was simply to present and analyze "one woman's career." I made no arguments—fatuous or not—"in favor of traditional womanhood" (whatever that means). Nor did I uphold Rosina Lhevinne's path as a "virtuous" model, as an "eternal truth" for all women to follow. Rather it is my three readers who have done all such generalizing. Their consistent method of "argument" is to yoke together by violence the pe-

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jorative epithet and the irrelevant abstraction. One example: "Far broader than his trivial self-indulgent view implies, the goals of the women's movement are to alter not only personal relationships but also political, economic, social, and intellectual structures."

I do admire Rosina Lhevinne's life and "career." Like the troika, I do wonder what her life would have become had she not renounced a solo career at an early age. As my essay makes clear, I do feel there was a "price" for that renunciation. Where the troika clearly parts ways with me is in my assertion that there was also a gain. The troika disallows my assertion, and also Mme Lhevinne's, that her decision was right for her and that it brought as much (I would say) or more (she would say) gain than loss.

It is curious—and worse than that—that these self-proclaimed defenders of women's rights would deny a woman they acknowledge as exceptional the right to interpret her life as viable and worthwhile. For the troika—and I find this extraordinary—Rosina Lhevinne's life does not illustrate the "fulfillment of promise." For the troika, even in view of Rosina Lhevinne's achievements as a soloist in her later years and overlooking her forty years as a member of one of the world's foremost two-piano teams, her marriage "truncated her development as a pianist of first magnitude." For the troika, not only does Rosina Lhevinne's two-piano playing not count; neither does the fact that she taught at Juilliard from the first day it opened. These achievements are blatantly overlooked in the statement that she "opt[ed] for the socially sanctioned roles of wife and mother with a career annexed in the later years."

The major premise behind the troika's letter is that solo achievement is all that counts in life. For Rosina Lhevinne, what she achieved as a "soloist" later in life was no more or less valuable than what she achieved with her husband in the studio, on the concert stage, and through his own playing. Indeed, her genius, throughout her life, has been a genius for inspiring other individuals, both with words and tones, to appreciate and create musical beauty. Even her later "solo" career involved playing not alone but with members of the Juilliard Quartet, with Vronsky and Babin, and in concert with various orchestras and their conductors. To deny the viability of a life so rich musically and personally, as the troika does, is to display the kind of reductive thinking that gives certain exponents of the women's movement a bad name.

For me the most splendid result of the women's movement is that more and more than ever before in history women are realizing that they can choose the direction their lives will take. But that does not mean that choice has never existed for any. In 1898 everyone Rosina Lhevinne knew—her friends, her parents, her teachers, her husband—expected that she would go on to develop a solo career. She decided not to. The troika contends this decision was not extraordinary. I say it was. To go against the expectations of most of one's peers and elders at age eighteen is never easy, as many feminists of today know from their own lives and as many of their daughters will know a generation hence. I did not and do not point to Rosina Lhevinne's 1898 choice as an absolute model for any individual today—although clearly the troika is willing to display it as a kind of negative example. I simply said, and say, that it was a viable choice for her.

Finally, I did not use the phrase "full blossoming of the inviolate self" to characterize the woman's movement *per se*. As my essay made clear, my use of the phrase derived from Emerson and from the many American men since him who have marched to the exhilarating drum-beat of pure self-reliance. My essay simply expressed the hope that other drums would continue to be heard too, by both men and women. The drums I am interested in are those that tap the message that one may find one's life in the losing of it and that renunciation and self-scarifice—though far from being the only virtues—can be of human value and lead to human growth. If this message in these days is perceived by more than three as cliché-riddled and retrograde, then I am more pleased than before to have written the essay.

Getting Off the Bullock Cart

Mr. Gerschenkron's thoughts on educational reform ("Getting off the Bullock Cart," Spring 1976) struck me as eminently sensible. Accepting the potential of the oral examination and of classroom discussion cannot help but lead us to the realization that the development of such oral communication skills is seldom part of the training of university teachers. This realm of oral communication skill development is surely one place our educational system could be improved. Although it is estimated that we spend 75 percent of our waking time speaking or listening, the schools generally devote relatively little attention to these skills. It is time to realize that verbal skills result from focus and practice as do written skills. Consider how much time and attention is given to reading as compared to speaking and listening.

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